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The Coming Religion

Charles F. Dole

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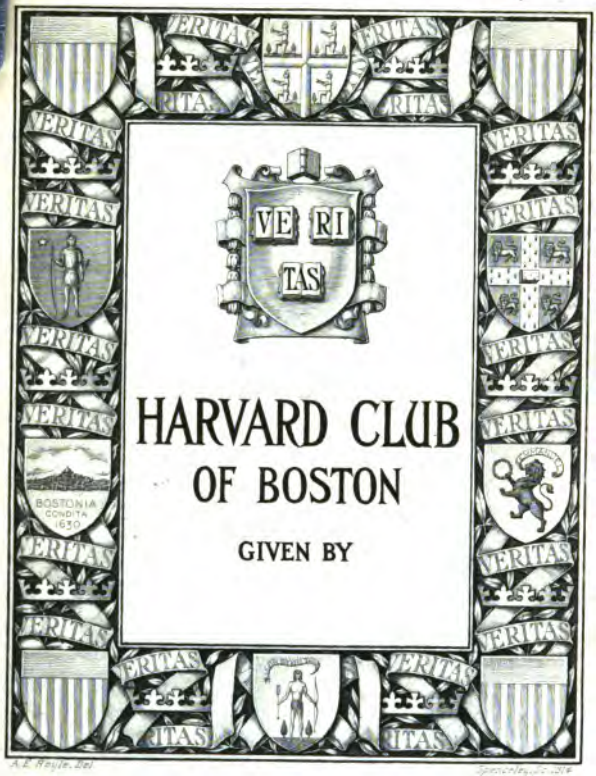

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THE
COMING RELIGION

THE

COMING RELIGION

BY

CHARLES F. DOLE '68

AUTHOR OF "THE ETHICS OF PROGRESS," "THE COMING PEOPLE," "THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY," ETC.

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To all readers interested in the great questions of religion

To conservative readers who hold to the reality under traditional forms of faith

To readers who think themselves wanting in religious feeling

To readers skeptical about religion, but open-minded and willing to be persuaded

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THE
COMING RELIGION

CHAPTER I

THE OLD AND THE NEW

WHEN I speak of the *Coming Religion* and venture to call it substantially a new religion, I say nothing that ought to shock really reverent people. The word *new* is as old and historic as language is. The process of the creation, or the evolution of the world is an everlasting reiteration of the old prophetic saying, "Behold, I make all things new." The marvelous kaleidoscope is always turning, and every turn gives a fresh combination such as no eye has ever before seen.

The story of the universe naturally falls into epochs, each one of which has its own new characteristic. Grant, if you like, that the mysterious forces behind the changes of shifting phenomena are constant in their pressure. Whether or not this is so, their effect is almost catastrophic. When the fullness of the age

comes, as when the glacial age drew to its end, it is like the breaking up of "the fountains of the great deep," or like the bursting forth of the buds in the spring time. Old and outworn things pass away, and new scenes, new conditions, new species and races appear. A nation is born in a day, at least in the seeming.

Reach back through the æons in search for the secret beginnings of our world, and we find everything at last dissolved in a heat of fire mist. Presently, as we return on our path upward, we discover what was not to be seen at all in the fire mist; namely, the elemental constructive atoms, as they play today in the fires of our sun. We look again, and we have something that no thought of man could have prophesied when the fiery atoms first came to birth, namely, solid crystalline structure out of which by and by temples can be framed and tools molten into shape. We return again, and a new wonder appears: I mean the first and lowest type of plant life; and again, perhaps after ages, the mystery of the earliest animals tenanting a watery earth. Presently the mammals are here, new creatures, in a world that up to their time could never have had prevision of their coming. And when the first man, who talks and thinks,

comes, it is a new world with a new destiny. But it is a still more surprisingly new stage in the process, when the kind of man appears who thinks the thoughts of the infinite and eternal, and forgives his enemies, or has no enemies.

There are those who are constantly crying "vanity of vanities," and saying doubtfully, "Who will show us any new thing?" and thus denying the reality of any law of progress in the universe. How can they possibly deny progress, and, more definitely, progress toward an end that justifies all means and cost, when the whole age-long story of science is interpreted to be one glorious march from monotonous, meaningless star-dust, on and up to a being who holds the stars in the grasp of his thought and measures their spaces, and stands up like a son of God on the earth! If this is not a purposive universe, with a plan and a destiny and a movement of progress, it is hard to see what intelligible interpretation of science is possible.

The course of human history is doubtless evolutionary in the slow working of hidden laws and forces, both economic and spiritual, urging its course. But it evidently breaks, or at least shades, into periods, each with its own prevailing mark or idea. Some new

emphasis characterizes each of its periods. There is a stone age, as related to the age of bronze or of steel; there is a savage state, the precursor of a half-civilized era; there is tribalism before the age of empires; there is at last something substantially new coming in with a rush, when man learns to turn on the colossal forces of nature and to make the whole world his work-shop and laboratory. The age of democracy, long heralded by the seers, is now upon us like the onrush of a great wave of the sea. Who can say that mankind ever before caught its significance or began to know how to apply it? We live in a new era of history, since the middle of the eighteenth century. Men everywhere now begin to be fairly conscious of the vast solidarity of human interests, and to catch the sight of the opening pathway of social progress toward which other generations had dimly groped. The change when Rome stretched its conquering arms over the world of classic history, and bound the fate of Greece and little Palestine with that of our primitive Anglo-Saxon forefathers in their low thatched houses by the North Sea, was not so great as the change that separates us from the men who colonized New England.

The story of religion also is a continuous series of chapters, each of which begins with a new lesson, or message, or gospel, or ideal, some of them merely tribal or sectarian experiments, or wild vagaries born to die; others, again, marking the main track of the advancing thought and the broadening spiritual life of mankind. What a strange misunderstanding of the Bible it was, when supposed "scholars" treated it as a single and consistent revelation of an absolute and completed religion! There are whole strata of successive religions hidden away in the pages of the Old Testament. Was not the religion of the prophets, and later, the religion of the synagogue, at least as new, compared with the religion of the High Places, and again of the Temple, as the religion of Jesus was different from the religion of Herod or Pilate?

The New Testament presents in the course of a little over a hundred years the most rapid and unceasing story of a developing faith. The writer of the Fourth Gospel does not use the same dialect that Jesus used. Possibly Jesus would hardly have understood this subtle and mystical gospeller, for example, in his prologue. Jesus' teaching was characteristically ethical and social. His favorite emphasis was

upon the life of the righteous, the merciful, and the meek. He reincarnated the ideal of the great prophet whom Micah quotes, the high-water mark of the Old Testament: "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" The good Samaritan, unorthodox in doctrine, but a good neighbor, was acceptable enough to Jesus. On the other hand, in Paul's writings, as well as in the final framework of the synoptic Gospels, you already catch a new and fluid form of religion, soon to crystallize into the actual worship of the person of Jesus, and into a dogmatic exclusiveness which for hundreds of years would certainly have imperiled the life of Jesus himself, if we can imagine him to have stood up to preach in any one of the great churches consecrated to his name! For the man thus ideally worshiped was not a Christian at all, judged by the tests that the new religion presently had imposed.

The fact is, there is not one Christian Religion, but many successive or contemporaneous varieties of it. They differ according to the prevailing emphasis, whether placed upon some form, upon a certain order of priesthood or government, upon some dogma or other, or

upon the nature of the life or the experience expected of the believer. The most certain thing about them all is that they lay their stress upon other points than those upon which Jesus placed his own emphasis. Who imagines, for example, that Jesus ever heard of the doctrine of the Trinity! It is also certain that in each case the points of emphasis belong to the shifting patterns of the world of the kaleidoscope. Ask men in any given church, even in the Roman Catholic, to tell you what they call the heart of their religion, and see how many varieties of answers you will get. We are ready now to consider the possibility that mankind may be today watching the incoming of a new and very wonderful form of religion.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW NECESSITY

THERE is an almost world-wide complaint today that people are turning away from the churches and temples. There was never so much skepticism about the traditional religion. Never were men less disposed to accept what priests or Bibles say. Man, swinging on his little planet, in endless space, the child of a remote ancestry beginning in the things of the dust, never before seemed to himself so small, even at the very hour when his own searching questions reveal to him the infinite power of the intelligence which dwells in him. New forms of the profound old questionings arise: Where can we find God? How do we know that there is a God? What sort of God is it? Does He care for man? Is He infinite and perfect? Or, is He perhaps involved along with man in the toil and travail of development? Is He one, or perhaps many? Is immortality more than a dream?

Never were men so frank in uttering their doubts. Modern literature is full of them.

Modern biographies such as Huxley's, Miss Martineau's, Lord Macaulay's, reveal the same fact in startling passages, or, again, in the complete absence of any sense of a spiritual life.

On the other hand, the world is fuller than it ever was of new interests and possibilities. Material successes and wealth are, or at least seem, close to the reach of multitudes. Sports, pleasures, luxuries, fabulous fortunes are everywhere on exhibition. The play of the new forces of steam and electricity has made everything possible. Only change the industrial system, multitudes begin to cry, and all shall have what once princes could hardly purchase. All these outward things seem vital and real. Religion in its habitual garb seems distant and unreal.

It is said that the working people are deserting the churches. They certainly are not thinking very much in the terms of a future life. They are setting their hearts upon the attainment of concrete and social ends, more humane conditions of labor, decent homes, better chances for their children, fairer distribution of the good things of the world. These ends become tremendously important to a host of people who have just awakened to

see both the disparities and the possibilities of what we call civilized life. The churches have not been very prompt or hearty or intelligent in seeing how to adjust their doctrines, their machinery, and especially their habitual emphasis, to a whole new set of requirements. Did not religion mainly exist for the sake of a supernatural life? Was it not essentially for "the worship of God"? Was it not the spiritual side of life, and therefore exempt from service on the material side? Temples and churches have proclaimed this spiritual mission for generations. It would really be a wonder if ecclesiastics, Catholic or Protestant, saw their way under the old forms and names to alter outright their point of view and their emphasis. They have not done it yet.

Moreover, many people will frankly tell you that they find the preaching of religion and the reading of the books of religion and certainly the reading of the Bible somewhat tiresome. It is probable that this was always so. There is no evidence to show that any large proportion of people ever enjoyed hearing sermons or reading the Bible. If people in the old Puritan days attended their churches with greater regularity than men go to church now (and old colonial records present a darker side

of the shield), there were certain stern compelling motives, partly of fear and of force, the very use of which infers reluctance on the part of the hearers. The fact is, that many of the subjects of religion, as usually presented, are not very interesting, especially to the immature mind. The Bible has certainly a good deal of very dry matter in it. The custom of hearing formal discourses or lectures with pleasure, to the number of fifty-two Sundays a year, is mostly an acquired habit. It was probably never expected of the average human nature, outside of the Puritan and Calvinist tradition.

Meantime, an immense popular change is still going on in men's attitude toward the church. Whereas they once feared to absent themselves from its services, they now feel more and more free to go or to stay away as they like. Whereas they once feared the supernatural powers if they broke the Sabbath, now they feel free to drive or sail or play or sleep on their weekly holiday. The new question comes with multitudes: What good does the church do? If it does not do very evident good, if it is not interesting, why should men expend money and time in order to sustain it?

Here comes the pressure of a new necessity.

Religion must be real; it must do some obvious good, and its message must be interesting. This demand is fair. The churches are finding it extremely difficult to meet it. They have on hand a large assortment of ideas which have hardly more than an historical value. They face the way of outworn and superstitious forms of religion, while a wonderful new form of religion is being brought to birth. Barring a few works of genius, all the traditional text-books and treatises of religion are as dead as the old text-books and treatises upon science and medicine. How can churches possibly go on much longer offering the ideas of religion which they have received from the bloody hands of men who burned witches and persecuted one another for errors of doctrine! Already the dreadful thing has come to pass, that young men of truthful and genuine character, seeking the service and ministry of the church, discover that its ancient watchwords ring false and those who utter them want earnestness. No religion can endure unless its preachers are real men.

One of the chief points of difference between the old and the new in religion touches the ground of authority. Pretty nearly all the historical forms of religion were based on some

kind of outward and conventional authority. Moses taught thus: the laws came down from heaven; Prophets had visions and heard voices; the priests commanded thus; the Bible said it; Jesus taught it. Thus the multitudes believed because they trusted their priests, their prophets or saints, their sacred book, their Christ. They were like boys who commit their geometry to memory without understanding it. Religion was a system of aristocracy, where the few ruled or taught and the rest obeyed.

Yet in the early times there was a significant vein of individualism and even of liberty in religion. The best of the Hebrew prophets were radicals and revolutionists, setting their personal vision or word, "Thus saith the Lord," against the ancient high-places, and against not only the priests of Baal but the priests of Jehovah. They dared to doubt whether the worship at the altars did any good for God or man. They ventured to predict that the time would come when every man would know as much about God as the priests or the prophets. "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh." This, they said, was the gospel. Jesus was no lover of the priests. Jesus said to men, "Why judge ye not even of yourselves

what is right?" Not the Jewish people, but the priests put him to death as one who threatened their system. Religious persecution has always tended to be ecclesiastical rather than popular. The Holy Inquisition at Madrid and John Calvin at Geneva did only the same thing which the priesthood at Jerusalem did in the name of traditional authority in religion.

The time seems to be now coming when men are asking to have sight for themselves of the supposed secrets of religion. In a democratic age all kinds of aristocratic authority, religious as well as social and political, are called in question. What do priests or ministers know about God or immortality more than the rest of us? men ask. What can they read out of the Hebrew Bible or the Greek Testament more than we can read out of the plain English Bible? What special advantage, pray, had men in the Bible times over the men of the twentieth century to legislate about marriage, or to teach the nature of the Almighty? Did Jesus indeed know all? Was he, who liked to call himself "Son of Man," never mistaken? Was he not rather the child of his age, exactly as we are children of our age? In plain terms, is there one important teaching of Jesus which we today believe merely because

he taught it, and not rather because it seems to us to be true?

Here is the immense pressure of a new and democratic need. It is not yet as loud as it is going to be. No one who has felt it ever forgets it. New voices every day are raised for it. I do not say that these voices are always pleasant or gentle or modest. They express an egotism at times as coarse as the egotism of arrogant priests or false prophets. But they express a great popular movement. They can never again be silenced; they must be met. They are right in their conviction that if God is at all, He is here and now; that if He has ever made Himself known to any men, then all men are likewise His children, and all men ought to hear from Him and be assured of His reality; that if He is the All-Father in any true sense, He cannot be conceived of as having favorite Sons, since all men need His presence and help; that if so wonderful a hope as that of immortality is based in reality, our reasons for it cannot surely depend on any single and remote historical event, such as Jesus' resurrection, hopelessly beyond the possibility of our demonstration. If religion is real and if we are immortal by nature, then all of us, the plain people, ought to have some way of know-

ing it, and ought not to be compelled to take the word of some one else for such momentous facts. This is to say, that the coming new religion must be more democratic than religion ever yet has been.

Let me guard in passing against a possible misunderstanding. I have no idea of the democracy, whether political, industrial, intellectual, or spiritual, as a dead level of mediocrity. There must and will be leaders to the end of time. The world will always need specialists, experts, trained engineers, captains of industry; it will also always need men of vision. Wherever there is real authority, men will gladly listen to it. Whenever there comes to be a consensus of real authority about religion on the part of the men who can say, "We have seen," "We have felt," "We have observed or experienced," men will willingly take heed. The man who learned the royal fact that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" will be authority on that subject. But the day has gone by when any leader or prophet may claim a monopoly of his message or his vision. Perhaps he saw the new star from the vantage point of his high observatory. But it will not be credible that he really saw it, if he remains the only one who saw it, or unless

he can show it to any other observer who is willing to stand at his point of view. So much for democratic authority.

I almost hesitate to say that the coming religion will be rational. This has been said so often that it begins to sound tiresome. I do not mean that everything in this vast world can be reduced to a plot and defined in simple propositions. We doubtless live in a realm of mystery. There is a mystery about space and time, about the thought of "the infinite," about the origins of all things, about love and consciousness and life itself. You know life when you cannot define it; you know beauty and music though they transcend all your mathematics; you love, and whether you give reasons for your love or not, it passes the bounds of reason. Religion too belongs with the deep and ultimate values. You can reason about it and reason toward it, but reason is at best only one element in it. Most people believe in it as they believe in music, or love, or life. When therefore I say that religion is reasonable, I do not deny the quality of mystery. This exists in myself and in every other self. But I say it is the mystery of light and not of darkness. Wherever we traverse it, reason keeps company with us and never leaves us.

I mean that there can be no lasting absurdity or contradiction in our universe; that we are still in the realm of order and unity; that no corner of it is given over to chaos; that all that we see or know or feel gives us confidence that the order and beauty and fitness continue where we do not yet see.

All this constitutes a new attitude as regards men's habitual expectation in religion. Men have looked for signs and wonders, and miracles, the more irrational the better. It has not troubled them that the infinite Creator should stop the sun in its course to allow a favorite general to smite his enemies! Or that He should pile the waters of the Jordan in a heap so as to save His chosen people the trouble of building a bridge! Or that Jesus should intervene in behalf of his improvident host, and as if by act of magic suddenly change gallons of water into excellent and strong wine! It did not trouble men to suppose that in this extraneous region of supernatural wonder you might bring a ship to port through stormy seas by the formula of a prayer, while the next ship, as well or better manned, not having the words of the prayer said over it, should go to hopeless wreck! It did not trouble men to think that a God had died on a cross to buy

entrance to paradise for Christians, and especially the orthodox variety of Christians, while all Buddhists, Mohammedans, and heretics were thrust down to hell!

When now we say that the coming religion must be rational, we mean that mankind will not continue to allow priests or ministers to shut up any dark room in the vast temple of life, and make this closed place the shrine of religion, and still expect their fellows to believe whatever preposterous things they may be told about what goes on there. We cannot believe that any region exists where men must shut their eyes and not even try to see? The field of religion is the whole wide universe. Religion belongs to the whole, and not to a corner marked "supernatural." Reverence is not to bow with closed eyes; it is to look up and admire and enjoy and be glad.

Can we truthfully say that religion bids men be glad? This is what we meant when we said that the message of religion must be interesting. A gospel literally means "good news," surely not bad or sorrowful news. But men have not commonly understood this of religion. How many out of all the hundreds of millions of people in Christendom can honestly say that their religion brings them genuine

gladness of heart? It will be my purpose in a subsequent chapter to show that the distinctive note of the coming religion is satisfaction and joy. For the present I wish merely to state that the need of joy is a valid hunger of mankind. The religion that does not meet it must die. The current religions do not meet it, except for the few. The need of the democracy for all good things is on a colossal scale. The world hitherto dull and dumb is coming to consciousness. It is not now enough to satisfy the wants of a few people. The demand is to bring a sufficient supply for the average man.

Meanwhile modern conditions of human life are startlingly unsatisfactory. I do not say that the weary cost of the centuries has wrought no wonders of amelioration. The lovers of liberty, the patriots and the prophets, the host of the humble lovers of men, surely have not lived in vain. Their grandest boon is that they offer us the sight of their visions. The many begin to see and to desire what they saw. Did a Christ love men and believe in them enough to die for his faith? Then millions of us can never be content till all men love and believe likewise. Did one man have joy and satisfaction in his religion despite disappointment and

suffering? We cannot bear it that men shall continue to bear disappointment and suffering and not enter into the wonderful heritage of full and all-round manhood, for the purchase of which every brave effort in the past has been put forth.

The fact is that we have been building the outward framework of our civilization in the last hundred years faster than we have constructed the inner and vital reality to match and sustain it. We have constructed a marvelous scaffolding for the temple of humanity. There was never such cost of material. There were never such forces set free. But where are the toilers and builders of the great temple? A multitude of them are ill fed, ill housed, on the streets, exposed to perils. Where are the happy workers, with a song in their hearts, worthy of the greatness of their task? They are here, you can listen at times and hear the song; it is a real song and all will learn it at last, but now the singers are few; the taskmaster still sets the pace of the work; the cry of the oppressed is yet to be heard. The world was never so rich as now; it had never before so much light; it had never so many voices of those who believe in "the eternal goodness." But it never felt before such mighty yearn-

ings, such deep needs, such stirrings of sympathy. No! there was never such a call for a veritable religion, simple, interesting, practical, ethical, reasonable, spiritual, gladsome, commanding, democratic.

CHAPTER III

THE BACKGROUND OF RELIGION

It may be that some reader is already asking the question whether religion is a real subject. This doubt is certainly in the air. Religion has so long been associated with darkness, mystery, unreason, death, a future life and the unknown, that many persons are more or less consciously skeptical about it. Sometimes they tell us frankly how they feel. "We are not religious at all," they say, perhaps flippantly, again in a tone of regret, like men who cannot enjoy or understand music. "We never have had a thrill of religious experience," they say; "we have never seen visions; we have had no sense of the presence of God; God has never made Himself known to us. We have tried to pray, but no answer has come back; we have attended church, but we have not found religion; the fact is, we have no religious nature." What can anyone say to this frank and honest statement of the attitude of a considerable number of men and women whose opinion and character everyone respects?

I wish now to show that there is a great deal more religion in the world than most people are aware of; that there is a great background of religious reality with which we are all vaguely in touch. We all share it; it belongs to us and we belong to it; it is our birthright and the mark of our humanity.

I can illustrate what I mean here by the fact of the constant presence in our consciousness of the blue arch of the sky. Multitudes of men seem hardly to think of its existence; they do not watch it; they go into no ecstasies over its beauty and its unfathomable depths; they take dully as a matter of course the shining of the stars; they do not even know the names of the planets. And yet they live in the presence of the sky. Darken it or cut off the sight of it, or remove it, or blot out the stars, and the dullest of us would note an immeasurable loss in our lives. The truth is, the reality of sky and starlight and sunshine constitutes what we may call the background of our existence. This is so whether we take these things definitely or not into our consciousness. Here they are nevertheless, and most of us mind them more than we imagine.

I might make use in a similar way of the undeniable fact of the mysterious force of

gravitation which the world of men lived by for thousands of years without even having any name for it. Or I might use the equally marvelous and quite unseen force of electricity, whose flashes and strokes men once thought wholly exceptional, supernatural, and terrible, but which we now count upon as a constant, mighty, and beneficent presence in every village, and which we assume as pervading the earth. I wish to suggest that in a very large and yet real way the field of religion likewise lies about us and over us and makes an essential part of us.

Let us not be ashamed to admit that the beginnings of man's spiritual life, in the case of the whole human race as in the case of each child, were humble. The childhood of the race was doubtless haunted with blind dreads and terrors, — terrors of the darkness, terrors of the forest and mountains, terrors of the sea. Perhaps every child still has to pay tribute to this primitive inheritance of apprehension. It does him no lasting harm any more than it did to his forefathers. But it distinguishes him as a child of men and not of the beast. The being who dreads and fears has begun to think and forecast. Fears mark the path of sympathy, mutuality, co-operation for defense, and finally

love. The dread of the unseen powers of the darkness is a step toward understanding the light, and the law by which it throws shadows. What is it, behind and within man, urging him to strive and climb, compelling him, a child of the dust who once only beheld the things of the dust, to lift himself up and look into the sky and begin to live the free life of a son and a citizen of the universe? It is a power not himself, but mightier; it is an inward spiritual gravitation and attraction; it is, in a word, the power that makes religion. It is not yet essential that man should even name it rightly; he may call it one or think it many; he may misinterpret its meaning and be unaware of his own destiny. Yet this power of the unseen life urges him and never leaves him.

Do you mean to say, some one asks, that the wild and monstrous vagaries of superstition of which the world at vast cost has even now hardly rid itself, have really a religious significance? Yes, we answer, as we give value in the processes of life to the dark beginnings of the sprouting seed under the clod. The savage who feared the unseen gods and tried to propitiate them was more than the animal who never knew enough even to fear. The man who, praying to his unknown god for

bread and offering his first fruits for the gift of the harvest, dimly stretched upwards to the light and thus gave his soul growth, seems to me rather more respectable than his modern descendant who merely despises the history of man's early childhood, or thinks his own egoism to be the center of existence. It is good to be emancipated from fear of bogies, but it is not good to be merely emancipated, if the mind is straightway filled with a new cohort of equally selfish fears about the unseen microbes. The superstition of grown men, or of men who ought to be grown men, is dreadful, not the superstition of children who do as well as they know. We recall Wordsworth's familiar lines:

> "Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
> So might I, standing on some pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn, —
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn."

The early men, however, seem not to have been wholly weighted with superstitions and terrors. Their world was also a bright world, with joy and feasting and rude games in it. If unseen powers were sometimes their enemies, so were unseen powers also their friends.

The god was the father of his tribe. "A wild and preposterous error!" you say. No. Here was the beginning of a mighty thought. There was goodness, kindness, mercy, forgiveness over and beyond man's little life. Who can call this an irrational thought? Is there no goodness at the heart of the world? Where then do goodness and mercy come from? For man is only that which the life in and through the universe makes him. Perhaps we shall see that the bold and preposterous thing is to deny the reality of goodness, mercy, fatherhood as the ultimate facts of the world!

At any rate, here is the fact that somehow mankind has been prompted on a grand scale to look upward, to feel out for an unseen Power of goodness, like the tendrils of a climbing plant stretching for support. The vine may not know that it will discover a trellis, but its nature compels it to spring forth and seek one. So in some form man is made to desire that which is higher, greater, better than himself. The wonder is that nothing finite can satisfy him. He tries all kinds of experiments in his search for deity. The fetish, the family god, the tribal god, the god of the nation, the god only a peer among other gods, the god of limited goodness or power, the god of a single

creed — no finite god suffices. The one God that man's imagination requires and feels after is seen at last to be the supreme life of the universe. This is not an abstract God, whose qualities have been reduced to a bare conception of absolute Being; it is the Life and Power and Goodness in whom inhere all real values that make the world.

One reason, indeed, why many men at present deny God is because the hunger of their souls remains unfed by any of the familiar creedal conceptions. The god of the churches is not good enough for them. Ask anyone, however, whether, if he knew that behind all visible things there is a Life, both beyond us and within us, real, mighty, righteous, friendly, loving, out of which we come, in which we may rest, in whose companionship we need never be lonely, in the sight of whom we need never have a fear, he would not be glad to be conscious of this reality. This idea in a large way meets a need, a longing, an instinct in the heart of every one of us. It answers to our quest, as the solid stone wall answers to the tendrils of the vine. I believe and wish to show that life, with its mingled experiences, the impress of the strange and beautiful world around us, the social bond, the pressure of great human prob-

lems, the lessons of friendship and love, is found to be one mighty structure of religion, within and behind which a real and living Presence reveals itself. We do not have to prove this. We have merely to open our eyes and watch. It proves itself, as gravitation does, or the electrical energy.

We reach here a large and sympathetic view of the significance of a very wide range of religious customs and observances. There is little that we can afford altogether to despise. The question is not what particular form of historic religion was right, while all the others were wrong, but rather what elements in all the historic religions have marked the growth of humanity and afforded some kind of trellis upon which man's higher aspirations might grow. So far as any of these religions appear bad or cruel or degrading, it is because we have come to view them in the light of higher and more noble forms of religious thought and feeling. We must cease to be offended on account of the variety or the difference of religions. Our quest is for the religion that is behind and under all religions. For it is this deeper religion that we shall discover in all of us, common to man.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELIGION BEHIND THE CREEDS

We are often told that the people of a country are Catholics or Protestants. We may be told that in England or the United States so many millions are Methodists or Baptists. These names are largely on the surface of the life of the people. Among those who go to church or belong to churches, many express no real opinion of their own by their choice of a church. They go to church for social or hereditary reasons. It would be interesting to try to discover what the religion is in the minds of the men whom one meets, behind and underneath their creeds. Would they not be found to be far nearer together than they generally suppose?

Let us go, at least in imagination, into various churches, whether Protestant or Catholic or Hebrew, and see what we find. Let us concede at once that we shall find much that seems irrational or vulgar or even ridiculous. There will sometimes be false priests and insincere ministers. There will be survivals of medieval

or even pagan thought, ideas, and observances; there will be little to show on the surface of "love to God or love to man." Nevertheless, we shall distinguish, involved with various discordant matter, a kernel of inestimable value. The plain people worshiping in the rival churches are one in the possession of a more or less keen sense of the essential mystery of life, of wonder about its meaning and destiny, of some kind of trust that life is worth while, of hope that it works for good and not for evil, for continuance and significance and not for futility and death. They are one in a sense of human frailty and need, and often also, though not always, of discomfiture, disharmony, error, and wrong-doing; and in a nameless longing for rest, harmony, peace, fullness of life. They are one in a sense of duty or obligation to a higher Power.

Moreover, these people are in church not as bare individuals each for himself; they belong for the time to an order or brotherhood. They stand together for certain ideals, both for the personal life and for humanity; — ideals of justice, sincerity, mercy, peace, and good will. At their best, they purpose to go the way of these ideals and to translate their vague aspirations into conduct. They are coming also to be one,

Hebrews and Christians (we might add Mohammedans, Buddhists, and others) in response to the challenge of a certain personal ideal of the perfect life. They do not give this personal ideal the same name; the elements that make it are never quite the same in any two fellow worshipers; the figure of the Buddha, or the Moses, or the Christ, caught in the camera of each man's imagination, could never have been the actual person of any man who ever lived. This difference in detail does not matter. The fact is, that there is a growing oneness among men as to the kind of ideal person who can be called "the image of the divine," the "God-man," namely, the most perfect thought of the man (or woman) whom each one would wish to be like.

What shall we say of the religion of multitudes of men who never go to any church? Perhaps half the inhabitants of Christendom belong to this class. Great cities like New York and London contain millions of them. Are they therefore heathen? Have they no religion? Those who know them best will tell you differently. These multitudes in fact have very much the same deeper religion that Tolstoi attributes to his simple Russian peasants. They have a faith in a righteous God, they rec-

ognize ideals of justice and goodness, and they hope that even their dull lives count for something in the great universe, and that their sufferings are not permitted for naught. A certain faith, under the bond of which the individual man dimly thinks of himself as a child or member or citizen of a vast order, lies in the background of the consciousness of common men in churches or out of them. It easily awakes at the stirring of a new love, at the stroke of a loss, in the face of death, at the command of a new duty. No one is wholly a man unless this element that turns toward religion is in him. They used to call Mr. Robert Ingersoll an infidel, but no one who knew the actual Mr. Ingersoll ever could call him that. Mr. Ingersoll represented a considerable number of men, more religious than they themselves were aware, quite as religious in fact as many church members.

We have touched on the fact that man has a bias to belong to something, to some order, fellowship, or brotherhood larger than himself. This instinct is the stuff out of which religion is born. It is said that man is essentially brutal and selfish. But man is also essentially social, and the social impulse is always at work lifting him out of his animalism and selfishness.

Thus, there is a sort of religion of the family. Fidelity and loyalty are the marks of this domestic religion. How much does the individual owe to his family? Everything, we answer, that the good of the home demands. There is an infinite element in this common domestic religion; who is so mean as to be bought or intimidated to betray his home, or children, or brothers, or to disgrace his parents? The most timid woman becomes heroic under this common pressure of family devotion. Perhaps the primitive worship of ancestors helped to develop it. However this may be, it behaves as if it grew out of the soul of the universe. No priest's religion is more genuine or fundamental.

The religion of the family opens into a larger circle of religious reality, touching the tribe, or the village, or the neighborhood, or the group of our friends. Thousands of plain people know a veritable religion of friendship or of neighborly fidelity. Men may be seen every day neglecting their selfish pleasures, their own business, their narrower interests, even sometimes their own families, at the demand of their neighbors' necessities, in times of peril by fire, or flood, or sickness, or famine. You can count on their loyalty as you count

on the rising of the sun. Who is so poor as not to know this kind of friendship? Our point is that the devotion of the neighbor or the friend is the very core of religion. The religion of altars, sacraments, and temples is not so real and holy. Let no one who knows real friendship ever suppose that he has no religion.

Does someone suggest that dogs and horses show signs of the same utter and loving devotion to their masters? We think so much the more of the dumb creatures, our fellows in the procession of life, but this is no reason why we should think less of man. The point that we urge is, that there is in the encompassing Life out of which we proceed an element of infinite faithfulness and devotion. What wonder if even beasts and little birds share it! None the less does it rise to the heights of gladsome and willing consciousness in the life of man. Man recognizes its significance. It is a revelation of the universal life. Man becomes man and ceases to be brute by giving himself to the duties of this infinite social religion.

A whole ascending group of humane relations, each with its appropriate bonds, its conditions of membership, its costs and dues, its satisfactions and joys, now arises. Men will tell you that their Masonic or Odd-Fellows

Lodge is their church and their religion. Thousands of men will tell you that Socialism or Labor Unionism is their religion. This is not for the small reason that there is a sort of ritual or outward religious observance in the Lodge, or because men may have taken an oath of initiation into a Union. It is because they have joined an order of humanity, because their comradeship appeals to their chivalry, because they would go to their death, it may be, for the principles that bind them to one another. Sometimes they deny religion, but their loyalty is itself a deeper religion than the words or forms of their denial.

There are other men whose patriotism is their religion. Were Washington and Franklin, though professing no conventional creed whatever, yet venturing their lives and fortunes for the young American nation, less truly religious than King George and the Tory churchmen, their contemporaries, saying their prayers in English Cathedrals?

Others too have caught the religion of humanity transcending all bounds of nation. Mazzini was such a man. So was Abraham Lincoln. The world of men was their family; and wherever the needs of men were they were ready to serve. There are men who have gone

beyond forgiveness to enemies; they have no enemies, and you cannot make them your enemies. This is the substance and normal development of that simple, social religion of devotion which we have found beginning in the home, in the tribe, and in the village. Mr. Frederic Harrison's religion may be vague and inadequate, but so far as it involves the element of an infinite loyalty to mankind, it certainly partakes of the nature of religion.

We have been close to the edge of the most profound human fact, — the sense of obligation or duty. There is an obvious hierarchy of duties that go with us into every group or order to which we belong. You do not wisely say much to children about their rights. You tell them of their duty to obey, to serve, to help, to stand true. They instinctively know what you mean. So too no one is really a friend, or a true member of any order or society or city or State, who is in it merely for the sake of asserting his rights. His membership in it is ignoble unless it concerns him with duties and services. More largely yet he belongs to the family of man, the Order of Humanity, not for what he can get out of his fellows for himself, but for the sake of what he can contribute to the enrichment, welfare, and happiness of all.

Everywhere a more or less constant gravitation of duties, with its everlasting and inexorable whisper of "Ought," is upon him. This is the nature of the universe of which he is a member. There is nothing finite in it; there is "no discharge in this warfare"; no real man would have it otherwise if he could. Indeed we conjecture that there can be no distant star where the same pressure of obligation would not hold good. It belongs in the same realm with beauty, order, and love, and constitutes a citizenship of the universe binding each man to all loyal beings. Now, this urgency of duty is the spiritual background of religion. Whoever hears the voice of duty is listening to "the voice of God." Whoever obeys is, in the act of his obedience, religious. He is one with the eternal and universal life of God.

A wonderful fact of common experience follows. Whoever accepts any duty and proceeds to do it, the young child in the household, the pupil in the school, the citizen for the sake of his town or State, the humane man for an unpopular reform, the righteous man in the name of justice, — there follows straightway a sense of inward rest, trust, fearlessness, and peace. Nothing is more common than this fact. Every reader must have at some time felt it. We

shall have occasion to speak of this later in another connection. We wish here merely to remark that this inward sense of peace is the substratum of religion. In the act of duty you trust that all will be well. You trust, even though you do not and cannot see how your trust will be justified; neither do you trust because your fellows thank or praise or reward you. In the highest exercise of duty you seem indeed often to stand alone, and the little world of your fellows or comrades, or the members of your party and sect, leave you alone. Nevertheless you march in the dark and trust; the fear of consequences vanishes, and perfect peace possesses you. There is no higher or more accurate word to describe this kind of human experience than to say that it is the ultimate essence of religion. Is it religious to burn incense, or intone a prayer, or feel a thrill of awe in the midst of a crowd in the dim vaults of a cathedral? Whether you say Yes or No, we do say that if there is any reality in the upward reaches of the souls of myriads of men in many generations, it is religious to let one's self go in an act of trust, whenever the simplest human duty commands.

We have certainly traced a line of growth in our thought of religion. Let religion stand

for the name of our feeling and thought in the presence of the great background of mystery that surrounds human life like the sky and the stars. This presence appears at first to the child or the savage as a dim and dark realm, full of fears, tenanted with ghosts and monsters and unknown powers of darkness. But even to the early man it is also a realm out of which the sun shines and the harvests come, and the strange boon of life and the laughter in children's eyes. There is not fear only, but also a sense of companionship in the mysterious groves and the hill-tops where the sacred shrines were set up. But by and by, as the child becomes a man, and the man becomes humanized, there grows to be a joy in the desert places, in the lonely hills and forests, in the vast spaces of the star-lit heavens; fear passes away; the mystery of darkness changes to a mystery of power and light and beauty; the man belongs to the mighty universe as a child of its Life; its noblest society here opens up into reaches of possibility beyond his present sight; its laws become his normal conditions of health and welfare; its duties of obedience, truth, justice, honor, loyalty, devotion become his chosen delight.

We have touched upon facts which charac-

terize the religion behind and underneath all creeds. There is reason to believe that multitudes hold this religion, at least in a dim form. It hardly as yet comes to consciousness in them. They never think of themselves as religious, and conventionally religious people perhaps despise them as "unconverted sinners" "outside of the fold." This plain and simple religion needs to be interpreted and brought to men's consciousness and developed. The full possibilities of it remain to be seen. This is our task.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW MESSAGE

THE new message is a very bold one and will not be received at once by every one. It is that this world in which we live is God's world. This means that it is a good world; that, all appearances upon the surface to the contrary, goodness is at the heart of it and behind and before it.

The old official message of religion was not indeed wholly different, but so far different as to make on most minds a totally different impression. It said that good would win in the end, in another realm of existence, but that here good and evil struggle in the dark for mastery. Its heralds put off the coming of the kingdom of goodness indefinitely, and, as we shall see, made the good life either for most men impracticable or, for a few, a constant crucifixion. In brief, they taught that this was substantially a lost or wrecked world, and that men were lost souls with only a chance of being saved. This has been the common understand-

ing of Christianity, called therefore, through most of its history, "a religion of redemption." This is still a current teaching in tens of thousands of churches. Great creeds, confessions, hymns, and orders of devotional service are based on this idea, and are repeated every Sunday by millions of people, with but little sense on the part of the worshipers that the words which they utter have changed their meaning, almost to the point of hollowness and unreality, for all who read modern books or newspapers. In the face of this teaching about a lost world, we venture to say that this is God's world, here and now.

On the other hand, many will say almost too glibly: "Yes, we are aware that this is God's world, or at least we have heard it so described." But while they say this, few of them really believe it. How many act consistently, as if this were the fundamental fact of life? How many take the good of it? It is indeed a startling proposition. The mere statement, This is God's world, with only an "if" or "perhaps," is enough to set the blood tingling for anyone who catches the greatness of the message. Nothing greater can be said. All wonderful conclusions instantly follow; the most exalting emotions — gladness, satisfac-

tion, peace, loyalty, good will — spring into play; fear goes out; beneficent conduct becomes the immediate expression of the life. All this arises to consciousness in the hour when a man tries the key of the lock of the mystery of life on which the words *This is God's world* are engraved.

We said that there is no greater message that ever came to man. We can change its form, however, and possibly make it mean more. Let us say that We are God's children, or, again, that God in some true and real sense is our Father. We must admit that this is pure anthropomorphism; in other words, we strain language and use the highest and dearest words that we know, to express the idea of our relation to the mighty universe whose citizens we are. But why need we be afraid of anthropomorphism? Are our best words too strong, or rather too feeble? Do they mean too much, or do they not mean too little for our purpose? We are only doing the same in religion that we are obliged to do in our science; we bend the words that early man once framed to represent visible things, to make them express invisible realities. Force, atoms, gravity, attraction, magnetism, electricity, space, even matter, — these words are only symbols; they

cover mystery, they express the world in terms of man. How else could they express it? The wonder is that man can think the world into a Universe at all. The words justice, truth, love, spirit, God, the All-Father are akin to these other words. Do they express the poverty of our language? Yes, and also like the others, the majesty of our thought. Let us not be afraid of them and stop thinking, but use them as the tools of our thought.

Let us be bold enough to say the highest thing that we can conceive, namely, that there is that in the universe for which "Father" is none too good a word. In other words, there is that at the heart of the world which cares for its creatures or children, which is committed to do its best for their welfare. There is a life, not less, but mightier than any from which we proceed; there is that, not duller than consciousness, but more supremely conscious, out of which our consciousness rises; there is that not less intellectual, but more infinitely intellectual than we are, from which intellect springs; there is that which establishes order, number, law, unity, beauty. How else could we ever know order, science, or beauty? There is that which makes righteousness, and binds the world in the pathway of justice and inspires

love; and therefore we learn righteousness and are born to love. There is that kind of life in the nature of the universe, therefore, to which we can be loyal, as men who belong to a magnificent order of mutual service. There is that in the infinite nature, so human, to which we are so like, that we can even love God, as children love their fathers and mothers.

All this is involved in our message. It is involved in our feeblest attempts to think about the facts of the spiritual side of the universe. There is nothing so high that man ever conceived about God, which is not included in the scope of this thought. And yet, when we have said all, we bow in modesty, precisely as the true man of science bows before the power, the splendor, and the mystery which pass the uttermost bounds of his search. The reality does not seem less majestic or real because we must be modest about it.

We may sum up what we have said in the form of a parable, good, like any parable, only so far as it serves to carry a likeness to our meaning. Here is an apple tree that a man sees for the first time. He does not know whether it is poisonous or wholesome. Its branches are gnarly; its bark is rough and hurts his hands. He comes upon it in winter and he does not

know whether it is alive or not. He sees it again in the beauty of its blossoms, but presently its flowers pass away and he is disappointed. The little green apples appear, and the man finds them hard and sour. Perhaps he condemns the tree as worthless.

Where now is the error in the man's judgment of the tree? How is he ever to know the nature of an apple tree? He knows it, we answer, by the first ripe apple. The whole tree at its best is in the fruit. But the life of the tree is more than any of its fruit; it is that which makes the fruit. Why shall we not say, likewise, that we know the life of the universe in the highest ripe fruitage which the universe produces? The life of the world is more than man, but all its life, power, conscious joy, intellect, beauty, truth, and goodness is epitomized, whenever we see a single mature and all-round man. This was the truth in the old notion of an incarnation in one man, the Christ. It was true as far as it went. But it did not go far enough. What should we say of the tree that brought forth only a single ripe apple, while all the rest of the product remained green and worthless! Our message is, as sure as this is God's world, that all the apples are destined to grow to ripeness and use. The message is, not merely

that one was God's son, but that all are God's sons. We shall presently go on to consider how rational this is, albeit very wonderful. In fact, it is the only view of the world that yields both rationality and inspiration.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROOF OF OUR RELIGION

We propose now rather briefly to dismiss a number of questions, at least for the present. There is the question about God, What kind of God is He? Is He all-powerful and all-wise? Had He a beginning or no beginning? Did He foresee, know, and even predetermine all things? Is He alone unchanging while all things change? There are strange notions abroad as men speculate over these profound questions of existence. "What if God is not omnipotent?" it is asked. "What if God too is in process of evolution upwards!" some say. Why may there not be other divine beings and not one God only? say the "pluralists." What if some of these beings are not good but evil?

I do not say that these questions are unimportant. I suspect that every one of them arises from a certain point of view and is related logically to a certain kind of conduct, and moreover that the point of view may be practically related to the quality of the life that a

man is leading. I suspect that there are points of view from which one's vision is more or less disturbed or partial, and also there is a point of view from which, if we can attain it, the universe appears in its wholeness and reality. I surmise that no point of view is central that allows the beholder to break the world up either into chaos or a conflict of powers. I do not believe that any mind can remain content with the conception of a weak or finite or changing or growing God. One might pity, but could never trust such a God. The mind of man, as we have seen earlier, cries out, as if heaven-born, for the infinite and the eternal, and rests with nothing less. But for our present purpose I can only suggest, in passing, the grandeur of the problems raised by these questions about God, or, if you please, about the nature of the universe. Man is no mean creature whose mind is made to grapple with these wonderful questions!

I shall also let the vast problem of evil pass here, with only brief mention. I believe that we shall find it to be the shadow cast by the light. In other words, the things called evil belong to time, but all real good is of the nature of eternity. We are already adapting our knowledge of the world to this conception faster

than we imagine. Thus, a few generations ago, man stood in terror before the fiery volcano; in its pit evil powers worked ruin for man. Now we go to visit the place of fire as to an entertainment, and look down into the tremendous crater, Vesuvius or Kilauea, as we watch the progress of a thunder storm, and recognize no evil whatever, but merely the working of the friendly forces that made our earth. Fire burns, but no modern man wishes to change the nature of fire.

Again, we all face throughout life the risks of loss, accident, pain, and death; we dread suffering. Would we, however, if we could, take the risks out of life and reduce it to the monotonous terms of smoothness and comfort? What if, in the very nature of things, the unity, the beauty, the goodness, the love, the life of the world is all compounded and made to grow out of the working together of those mingled elements like the seething, internal fires of the earth, that, when felt so near that they hurt us, are named evil, but otherwise are innocent? The world is learning that "evil" is at least one of the costly processes through which life mounts upward. Call it an aspect of the under side of the work of the mighty loom on which higher life is woven into form.

We leave this only as a hint to provoke thought. We could not live in this finite life and know and grow and love without "evil"!

A deeper and more practical question presses. How may we really know that there is any God? or, that goodness is at the heart of the world? Where is the proof of our splendid message? Now, there happens to have been a long line of men and women who give us a straight, simple, and very practical answer to this question. They say something like this to us: "We do not pretend to make an argument that shall demonstrate the reality of God. It is borne in upon us and it "finds us," as reality is apt to do. We should as soon think of demonstrating our own existence, equally a mystery. As we assume our own personal identity, so we assume the inner causing life and mind of the universe. We defy anyone to offer a proposition so intellectual as this; we defy anyone to disprove it, or to set up any thought of the universe so rational as is the thought of God. We assume it as in the realm of outward nature we assume matter, though no one ever saw an atom of it. We proceed straightway to live and act as if the good God ordered our lives. We obey His laws, and we trust in Him; we live as if in His

presence, as men trust in the action of fire and water, or build houses on their faith in gravitation. We act thus, as we should naturally act in God's world, and the more exactly our conduct tallies with this idea, the act with the thought, the more completely our lives are sustained. The world answers to our trust more and more satisfactorily, as God's world would be expected to answer. We call this constant fact of experience as good a form of proof of the message of religion as any actual demonstration can be. The food nourishes us as proper food should. The ship sails and responds to her helm. The world behaves like a universe, whenever we use it so. Nothing else works or makes sense, and this does work wonderfully well!

This is really the same kind of demonstration that we employ with our scientific theories. We hit upon them at first almost as if by accident. A falling apple suggests to Isaac Newton the theory which binds the solar system. The conception pleases the intelligence and seems to fit known facts. It involves no contradiction or affront to the reason. The work henceforth is to try it in as many actual cases as possible and discover whether it does or does not give satisfaction.

The conception of matter itself, common and simple as it is, albeit mysterious, follows the same principle. There is that everywhere about us which makes on us the impression of hardness, resistance, inertia. We learn to add, what no child or savage would ever have thought of, namely, impenetrability. But we know less of the nature of matter the more we study it. It proves presently to be invisible, only making its effect of color or size through our organs of sense. We may even come to think of it as consisting of whirling vortices of force, or as composed out of a still finer substance, as fine as "spirit," which we call ether, — a word to cover a deeper mystery, as well as our own ignorance. Nevertheless, whatever we call it or imagine it, we all still use the name and the idea of some kind of substance. We behave as if we lived in a material world. We respect the hardness and the inertia of matter, and live as if matter were real. It is real in the large sense that all material manifestations are related together in a realm of cause and effect, of law, of orderly succession upon which we depend and in obedience to which our outward civilization is based. On one side we touch mystery, on the other side we know enough for all the practical

purposes of life; we see no limits to the extent of our further knowledge. All this knowledge and the practice that follows it proceed from an act of trust in the assumed reality of matter.

Now the men of religion tell us the same things of their trust in the reality of God. The world not only behaves to them as a material world, but they cannot understand it or get on with it unless they treat it and live in it as God's world. The spiritual aspect of the universe, in which duty, truth, beauty, and order lie, needs as much to be accounted for as the material aspect of the world.

This line of thought is all the better for being extremely comprehensive. It rests upon no narrow line of sectarian experience, confined to evangelical or orthodox, or Protestant or Catholic, or Christian believers. It appeals to the universal experience of man. Let us cite the case of a man widely known in American literary and public life, the late Edward Everett Hale. Here was a notable instance of a man who from early childhood lived and thought naturally and habitually as a child of God and treated this present life like a room in his father's house. He tells us that he always held the thought of the infinite Power behind

all things as "Our Father." He preached as his favorite Gospel: You are all God's children; live as His children. In this faith he sustained the common lot of man and bore his share of sorrows and troubles, through more than eighty years. All denominations united at his death in praise of this man's noble and practical religion. What man in America ever had a more effective, more useful, or happier life? The world answered to his trust in it, as you would expect of a rational and divine universe.

Let us take now a very different case. It shall be the narrow, austere, ultra Protestant, almost fanatical mother of Mr. Edmund Gosse, as described in his book "Father and Son." The details of her faith in which she and her little group of "Brethren" differed from almost every one in England are obviously absurd and unworkable for ordinary men and women in the actual world. But the deeper elements of her religion are the same as in the case of Dr. Hale, and they work out the same results. She believed implicitly in God's world and lived as if her faith were true. She obeyed her conscience, she dismissed fear, she made God's will her own; and she had peace, satisfaction, and gladness, though in the midst of what the world regarded as almost

sordid and vulgar conditions and environment. This is what her son says of the manner of her death: "Even an atheist might admit that the overpowering miracle of grace was mightily efficient."

Take now the picture of the good Bishop in Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables." It is typical of the highest experience of a considerable number of noble Roman Catholics. This man's serenity, his fearlessness, his beneficence, the sanity of his life, in no way depend upon his creed or his ritual. Beside him are a multitude repeating the same creed and practising the same rites, and yet they remain as mean, selfish, cowardly men and women as if they had never heard of a gospel. What is the difference between them and the sweet-natured Bishop? The difference consists in the fact that he believes himself to be a son of God and behaves accordingly, and the world answers to his trust in it; whereas the others never took their supposed belief in earnest and trusted it. There is an immense difference between swimming and only talking about it, or even practising the motions out of the water. There is the same difference between the life of religion and merely talking about it.

A recent periodical told the story of a brave

and honorable Chinese official, Kang Gu Wei,[1] who is an equally good illustration of our meaning. This Chinaman's religion was based on Confucianism, but he had read modern books and absorbed the best of the spirit of the universal religion. The man's life was lived as if in God's world, and the consequences known as "the fruits of the spirit" seemed to correspond. There was faith, hope, patriotism, humanity, fearlessness. What else does a man desire for the fulfillment of his nature?

These are not exceptional cases: the more one looks for them, the more numerous they appear. They are very common in private life. Instances are to be found in every village. The tradition of them goes back into remote times. Socrates and Plato were close to the secret of the good life. The noble Stoics were trying the same experiment. Read a page of Marcus Aurelius and doubt if you can that he knew the substance of what we are speaking about. The best of the Hebrew psalmists and prophets were familiar with the same facts. Religion is valid, as food is valid, because it supports life. Even a crude kind of religion, like a coarse food, is better than none. But it is always the food itself, and not the form in

[1] The Hibbert Journal, October, 1908.

which it is served, that renews the higher life of man.

It follows that the life of religion is not even dependent upon the consciousness of any man that he possesses it. Consciousness doubtless adds fullness and zest to life. It is a pity that a creature should not be conscious that he is alive, and thus be glad of his life. But life may be latent or sleeping without any active consciousness. So many a man lives as if he were a citizen of God's world, just, obedient, friendly, generous, without fear, and also without consciousness that there is anything religious in this kind of conduct. Some seem born to live so; they are "natural Christians"; some have learned through the costly discipline of life to take this attitude. Such a person is sometimes supposed by his neighbors, and even supposed by himself, to be an infidel, because he bears no conventional marks of piety and professes no creed. But what if he practises the noblest of creeds! What if he has found out what the ancient prophet Micah summed up under the great threefold rule: Justice, Mercy, Modesty!

In other words, whoever is living in justice, kindliness, and modesty has caught the secret and motion of the universe. And this is so,

whether he is aware of the fact or not. The universe answers to the experiment of this kind of life: the man's consciousness of the fact only makes it more impressive, intelligible, and imperative. Let us venture then distinctly to say that we believe that this is God's world, first, because this is the most adequate and rational thought of it, but mostly because we find that, whenever we treat it as such, it behaves as if a life or spirit of goodness were at its heart.

CHAPTER VII

THE MIGHTIEST OF ALL FORCES

We shall not need at first in this chapter to premise or assume any religious prepossessions whatever. Our proposition is that the greatest, most irresistible, and most practically useful of all forces that we know is good will. Perhaps we shall sometime discover that force itself is only a form or manifestation of will. But we know that will is higher than bare force and is able to use and direct it. Already the will of man, small as man's body is, harnesses every power of nature and makes it drive his wheels, light his towns, and carry his messages. And what is man himself, we wonder, except as some mysterious, intelligent, and directing will possesses him and shines through him? For it is certain that he does not evolve or create his own power, or even his desires, or determine his destiny.

See what will also does, though only in a man, to defy mere power and rise superior to it. The power of the tyrant, his armies, his

shackles, his dungeons, his tortures, his threats of death; the power of the storm raging over the unprotected heads of helpless seamen; the power of the lightning or blazing mountain before the face of a lonely man; the power of cruel majorities commanding in vain the obedience of a resolute conscience; in all times the will of the few or the one, of Elijah, of Jesus, of Huss, of Columbus, of the exiled Pilgrims, of Livingstone, has lifted itself undisturbed and invincible above all forms of violence.

We said a good will. For this is the whole of a man at his best, while an ill will, however tempestuous, is only a part of a man. In other words, any man acting at the height of his being, as a good will, just, friendly, generous, social, putting forth his powers for a truth or a principle, marching to do a service, is stronger, more effective, more irresistible than the same man acting at the bidding of the brute in him, his passions or his egotism. In one case the man drives the team of all the creature passions within him, whereas in the other case the creatures run away with the man. This is common human experience; every one has tried it on occasion. The man is most truly a man in the attitude of good will; and he is at his

best for every kind of successful effort when his good will, ruling every impulse and appetite, compels the whole menagerie of animal forces in him to do the work of his manhood.

I prefer to use the expression of good will rather than love. I want to emphasize what the word *love* does not always convey, the virile quality, purpose, determination, energy. I mean something higher than feeling or emotion, or a good heart. Will is the driving power in a man. Feelings come and go; they delude us; nothing comes of them; possible reaction follows them and leaves us even worse than we were before. The good will moves on its way, with feeling or without it. It can be turned on in the darkest night, as if by the motion of the man's hand directing the searchlight. Feeling follows the will, and rises out of its use, like heat out of motion. Acts follow the will and noble conduct develops from it. The good will, exercised again and again, becomes the law and the joy of the life.

See now the supreme law that binds human society together. *Use a good will at all times and toward every one.* You cannot always feel love toward every one, to the unwashed tramp who has told you a falsehood, to the boys who have trampled down your flower beds, to the

drunken neighbor who has beaten his child. But you can turn on and show a determined good will to every one of these unfortunate people. You can do your best for them, whatever that "best" may be. You can resolve to give them help rather than punishment. You can do better than to forgive your enemies. You can resolve never to have any enemies. However others treat you, you will never answer back with hate or ill will. We shall presently see whether this is not practical, and indeed that no other course is practical. We shall see that it is surely not always easy, but perfectly feasible, and neither so difficult or so costly as the alternative courses of hurtfulness are.

Let us turn here, however, for a moment and relate what we are saying into its place in the magnificent conception of the life of man as a child of God in God's world. We have so far spoken of good will as of any other force, electricity or heat. We have only ventured to hint what its nature might be in saying that man does not create will, but only expresses it through himself. We cheerfully concede that man can use the mighty power of the good will, without being in any degree consciously religious in its use, as he can use the water to

irrigate his fields without praying or thanking God for it. The main thing, indeed, with the good will, as with the water, is that men should turn it on and apply it.

Nevertheless, the question comes: Where is the source of will? It is confessedly the central, most personal, and most spiritual of powers. We cannot think of it as evil or as indifferent. It dwells with intelligence and never is seen except under some form of intelligence. An evil will is partial, weak, or short-sighted. A good will alone is intelligent, as a thoroughly intelligent will must be good. In other words, as we cannot conceive a truly mature and all round man to will evil, so we cannot conceive the infinite life of the universe to will evil. Here, as before, we guess the nature of the tree from the quality of the ripened fruit.

What follows? It follows that whenever we see a man acting in good will we see him acting as a son of God would act. To show forth good will is the nature of God, that is, of the spirit or life of the universe. It is the most personal, self-revealing, and characteristic of divine acts. To show good will is likewise the most characteristic act of the man. In this act he is at his height, as a personal and spiritual

being. Whatever is of good will is of God. To believe in good will, to follow its lead, to do its deeds, to express its spirit, is religious. But all this is so, whether a man accepts our thought of it or not. He might remain an agnostic about it. The main thing is that he shall act the part of a man of good will. Must not everyone agree that there can be no higher or more practical rule of life? "Whatever any one does or says, I must be emerald and keep my color." "Whatever any one does or says, I must be just, friendly, modest, helpful, that is, I must live as if I were a Son of God." We shall proceed to illustrate what this means in detail.

First, every one must concede that good will is the binding law of every home or family group. It is not a home where selfishness or self-will is predominant. A home begins to be constituted as soon as and only when one or more of the group take the attitude of good will toward the others. Whoever enters the home as a guest and brings no good will remains a foreign element, like a grain of sand in a machine. The guest or the servant who can contribute good will is at once assimilated into the common life. The child born into the home tends to catch the ruling spirit as if

through the atmosphere. The beginning of every deep morality is here, since the life of good will is the essence of happy social existence. Add growing intelligence, and the satisfaction, the restfulness, the joy, and the effectiveness of the family group are raised to the height of their power.

What is true of the family holds equally of every social group. Good will is the ruling power. Whatever member carries most good will, other things being equal, holds the balance of power or influence. As Jesus says, "He is the chief and greatest of all." This is to say, "Where love is there God is," in other words, the mightiest force in the universe is there. Every story of a great friendship bears this out. The little biography of Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer is a good illustration to show how vast and persuasive a force a single woman may wield over a multitude of friends.

Let us now make trial of our principle in the difficult and perplexing realm of business. Self-will, individual interest, the competitive struggle to overpass and even trample down others, they tell us, is business. The successful business man must be an egoist and not too scrupulous about the fate of his rivals. All this is indeed on the surface of business, as fitful

storms play over the irresistible tides and vast currents of the sea. The fundamental nature of every legitimate business, however, consists in some form of human service. Let them take pains to teach this fact in the new Schools of Commerce! The manufacturer makes something which meets a human need. Do you not suppose that he had better make it well than make it ill, the chair, the table, the coat, the bread? Had he not better bring it conveniently within the means of the purchaser? Does he think it well to rob, and not rather to benefit and please the consumer? What would happen to business if all manufacturers, with one consent and in sheer ill or selfish will, combined to injure the people? What would happen, on the other hand, if they all tried their best, or even formed a trust, to provide excellent, honorable, economical, efficient service? Would anyone starve because he had turned out an admirable product of any kind of article which the world needs?

We have a suggestive term: "The good will of a business." It does not mean the reputation that a manufacturer or merchant or banker has for his meanness, or for cheating his customers, or for disagreeable treatment toward them. It means exactly what it

says, that through a series of years people have found this business house trustworthy, friendly, efficient, and generous. It points to the fact that customers like to deal with this house and are accustomed to tell their friends about it, — the most effective form of advertisement. This subtle and most spiritual of facts may be equivalent to a capital of many thousands of dollars.

We deduce the practical proposition, that a man of determined good will to serve his customers to the best of his ability, and with uniform courtesy and consideration, will prove the successful man in any decent kind of business. We do not say that he will succeed without training or intelligence, any more than a young artist will paint good pictures without training in art. What we say is that, as devotion to art is the main and essential requisite for making an artist, without which no artist can ever be great, so devotion to the service of mankind is the cardinal condition of success in building, manufacturing, buying and selling, and every kind of business. We do not say that success in business is always measured by the amount of money or profit that a man wins for himself. Do you measure the success of an artist or a poet or a teacher or a physician by fees

or salaries or royalties? We affirm, however, that the man of steady good will, other qualities and conditions being equal, is sure of honorable success. The world will not let such a man starve.

We must recollect in this connection that all life is attended with risks. We all have our choice between noble and ignoble ventures. Does any one envy the professional gambler, or the burglar who happens to get off with his plunder?

Moreover, there is a steady pressure of the mighty social law, — the eternal good will urging the activities of man. Everywhere today business men are waking up to the fact that no enterprise is really private; that no man can safely be trusted to do what he pleases with his own; that the single condition upon which he may draw his share of income from the wealth created by the labor of all the world, is some form of honorable and purposeful, neighborly or public service. No man may ever rightfully own a railroad all for himself, or run an electric plant, or mine coal and iron, or monopolize a water power, or build factories and tenement houses, or even plant corn and cotton. He must answer to society for all that he does, and must presently make it plain that

his business does good and not harm, serves men and not robs them. Neither can any man long effect good and honorable service without a distinct and honorable intent to do this.

We have found the solvent for all social problems. Not that it will work without an equipment of intelligence and expert knowledge of facts and conditions. Nevertheless, the essence of the solution of every vexing problem is at the heart of religion. It is the application of good will. We are constructing a new penology on this basis. For thousands of years mankind had treated its offenders with the methods of hate, arrogance, and revenge; it had segregated its criminals as denizens of a lower world; it had multiplied punishments; it had met evil with evil and murder with murder. It never made one soul the better; it went on creating and maintaining the conditions of crime; it provoked boys' and mens' obstinacy and antagonism. We still spend a preposterous percentage of our taxes on the support of jails and prisons!

We are beginning to see the new law. The offender, the outlaw, the criminal is not the strong and dangerous person, the enemy of society. He is feeble, ignorant, ill born and unfortunately reared, the offspring of unwhole-

some social conditions, for which we all are perhaps as much responsible as he is. He is the object of our pity more than our fear. He is what we each might have been, with our circumstances reversed. We hate him no longer; we forbear to do him evil. We will try to help him and cure him. If need be, we will give him costly hospital treatment and make him fit for worthy uses. At the worst we will take care of him as we care for the hopeless insane. This method works as nothing else ever can work. It is true that it challenges our humanity and our chivalry; for there are not yet enough trained men and women to carry it on. But we know our way at last. In the light of the new religion no permanent hell can be permitted in any corner of the universe. Where the helpless and the sick are, there a resolute good will sets forth to lift up and save them. In this sense we preach the "religion of redemption."

We see the ugly faces of quarrelsome men ready to fight each other around the walls of a great factory. The employers and their workmen have an issue over wages or hours of labor. Perhaps the manager or superintendent has shown an arrogant temper as of one who is of higher caste than his Polish or Hun-

garian workmen. Perhaps a scheming labor leader has precipitated trouble. However the trouble comes, only one way leads to permanent peace. The question at bottom is not one of outward organization or of more or less money. It is a question of humanity. Turn your good will on your men, you who ought to know better than they what forces move human hearts. Forbear, as you have intelligence, to treat your men as you would not treat your horse or your dog. Be patient, as you would wish others to be patient if you had to live on a dollar a day. This is no idle preaching. It is what scores of progressive men are learning to practice. Whoever tries it is on the way to success with his work. We do not say that it is a cheap solution of colossal labor troubles. The spirit of humanity is never cheap. But we say that anything less is unworkable, and that this in the end is certain to win. This is the new religion in action.

There are those who prophesy the coming of Socialism, while others dimly fear it. Do we not all, however, so far as we are at all humane, wish the utmost betterment of social conditions? Perhaps no one can foresee precisely what outward changes in our economic system are necessary to this end. Can we not

agree, in the spirit of the larger religion which we are here discussing, that we will cheerfully take any step and adopt every desirable change as fast as we are shown that the welfare of man really requires it? Very well; there are plenty of obvious steps that we may immediately begin to take together. Let what will come! We will do right and not fear the consequences, least of all, fear the name of Socialism. In fact, Socialism is an admirable name, if it means the embodiment of the noblest Social Spirit. Otherwise, it is an idle name.

Again, here is the tremendous problem of racial and international relations. Men of different colors confront each other with old-time suspicion, fear, contempt. Nations are rivals in trade and colonial expansion. Never did this problem involve more friction and peril to the peace of the world than to-day, when all peoples are being bound in new ties of intercourse and urged to enter into a new world-order of co-operation. We can already see the lines of the only possible solution of the magnificent problem. The barbarous methods of suspicion, isolation, and mutual hate from within tariff walls and fortifications are doomed to pass away. Both spiritual and economical

forces are already at work to replace the cruel idea of the "exploitation" of the world for the sake of the few, by the new thought of the "conservation" of the resources of the world for the welfare of all. The "economic" interpretation of history henceforth takes a new departure.

We are trying this idea on a small scale, as if in so many laboratories, in a hundred different communities in our own country. Wherever the method of the new religion of good will is tried with resolution, prejudice and hate give way. Negroes do not naturally hate white men; there is no natural repulsion between the men of one race and those of another. Orientals are more like Europeans in their essential humanity than they are unlike in the superficial qualities that mark their differences. Meet the Negro or the Japanese or the Hindu or the Indian as a man, and he always understands this kind of language. He will give you as faithful service as you give him kindly respect. Thousands of employers and neighbors will tell you this from facts of their knowledge. The white man and the Zulu who show good will to each other are nearer together than two ministers of the same church who harbor jealousy in their hearts.

Take, finally, an even more familiar case of practical conduct. You are exceedingly busy some morning with work when an interruption comes. A child, or a stranger, or an applicant for employment asks your attention. This becomes the next step in the day's work, as if you were a man under orders to give your individual mind to the new business, though it seems to be no business of yours. Will you be vexed and thrown off the track of your regular work? See now a remarkable fact. The interruption has no power in itself to hurt your work, unless, being vexed, you lose your good will. Keep your temper and you can resume your work as if nothing had happened. Are we not right in our proposition that good will in large things or small is the mightiest force in the world? Does it not behave very much as if in using it we were putting the trolley of our little lives upon the current of a universal power?

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOOD LIFE IS NATURAL

THE opinion has long prevailed in the world that the good life, and especially the life of religion, is against the grain of human nature. This has been the burden of volumes of the teaching and preaching of churches, both Catholic and Protestant. Human nature, they tell us, is vile; it is natural to do wrong. You follow the line of least resistance in yielding to every kind of temptation. The natural man is selfish, mean, sensuous, quarrelsome, cruel. Plenty of proof texts can be cited from all the ancient scriptures for this pessimistic view of human nature. Of course plenty of facts seem to run the same way.

The upright life, on the contrary, was said to be a species of miracle. Nothing is so hard and well-nigh impossible. It comes about, if at all, by the special grace of God. One person alone has ever succeeded in attaining it. But he was an exception, born out of the course of nature, a unique being, commissioned of God for a special mission.

A colossal scheme of theology has been built out of the notion of man's natural depravity and the exceptional holiness of the one Christ. It still holds sway in the world. We are still told that the good life even now is dependent in some mystical way upon the touch or knowledge or influence of the exceptional life of one perfect Son of God who lived nineteen hundred years ago! Thus the momentum of a common and ancient habit of mind, long directed, moreover, in the interest of a powerful priesthood who held themselves to be the guardians of the means of connection with the single source of goodness, tends to persist, like a dying wind from a retreating storm. Thank God, we now at last feel everywhere the rising and wholesome breath of a new mode of thought. It is the idea of evolution or growth, spiritual as well as physical, with which the earlier view of human nature as intrinsically bad is totally incongruous!

There was another almost universal idea of religion in old times which identified it with certain abnormal states of mind and psychic conditions. To be religious was to be a magician or a medicine man. It was to dream dreams, see visions, and hear voices. It was to be in touch with the denizens of a supernat-

ural world, with whom you conversed in the mysterious state of trance. Mr. William James' interesting book on "Religious Experience" probably conveys to most of his readers an impression of the religious life as abnormal and morbid. The healthy-minded religion is made to appear of inferior value as compared with the religion of half-insane medieval "saints." It is as if someone were to characterize the working of a locomotive by the friction of its parts and the screeching of its whistle, whereas the best engine works freest of friction and ugly noises. The fact is, Mr. James has studied religion from the point of view of the physician, and has naturally exaggerated the importance of its morbid symptoms.

It has come to pass that a multitude of healthy people have conceived a prejudice against religion. A sane man desires to remain sane and not to carry on strange, forbidding, and ghost-like experiments over the dim border land of reality. If good and intelligent "spirits" want to talk with us, let them perfect their telephone lines to meet ours, and not compel us to be hypnotized, or to go into dark rooms and set up "cabinets" and detective agencies. Religion belongs to the realm of light. We are shy of any religion that pro-

poses to play upon our fears and awaken buried superstitions, or threatens to make us over into beings other than we really are. The religion of nervous excitement, of forced revivals and sensational emotion, whatever incidental value it may ever have had, is now recognized as perilous to mind and body. What is more important, it is at odds with good ethics, as no true religion can be.

The new teaching is that religion is as healthy and normal as life itself. It is the growth, perfection, and fulfillment of life at its best. So far from running against the grain of nature, it goes with the grain. So far from being a function of priests or of visionaries, so far from being at its height in convents and hospitals, so far from being an object of dread to a sound and well boy or girl, it is what any healthy young person would like; it is at its culmination in strong men doing the work of the world and in gracious wives and mothers. It is no special function of any class or exclusive priesthood, but constitutes the upward movement of life in every one. Let us, indeed, never forget if we ever use the word *holy,* that its best meaning is whole, sound, well, sane. In this sense any healthy boy would wish to be holy.

We do not, however, deny the facts that careful observers of the seamy side of life have pointed out. Grant that it is natural for men to lie, to cheat and rob, to quarrel, fight, and kill; grant that selfishness and animalism are in human nature; and that the record of history has been a very long and dreary tale of crime, war, trouble, and suffering. Grant even now that we live in a very uncivilized world, which only begins to develop the great human possibilities of religion. This is only to say that it is a world in the process of growth and that mankind has not yet come to his inheritance. It is only to repeat the old prayer more earnestly, "Thy Kingdom Come." It does not follow that man is depraved, or that human nature is bad, or, least of all, that goodness is not the normal life of man. It does not follow that man has ever turned his back on goodness, or "rebelled" against a good God. The truth is, that man is only now coming to learn the nature of goodness and to conceive of a truly good God.

We admit that it is natural to be selfish and to do the deeds of self-will. It is nature for a certain creature at a certain stage in its life to crawl on the ground, or under the ground as a worm, and it is equally the nature of the same

creature at a higher state of its development to fly, a gilded butterfly, in the air and sunshine. It is the nature of an apple at first to be green, hard, and sour, while presently the same apple will be red and luscious. It is the nature of a little child to be selfish, but just as truly its nature is to become social. It is the nature of a child to be timid and anxious, but it is the higher nature of the same child, when grown up, to cast out fear and to live a life of confidence. It is in a boy to be noisy and self-willed, but later to grow tender, thoughtful, considerate, and chivalrous. It is nature to say, "I want my own will," and it is nature also to say, "I want nothing so much as that which is best," that is, "I want what is God's will."

The old view of Paul is true to life: "When I was a child, I thought as a child, — when I became a man, I put away childish things." This is not because the man denies his childhood, but because he expands toward maturity. It is therefore without irreverence toward the sentiment of Christendom, and with great sympathy, that we affirm a larger thing about Jesus' life than has been commonly said. We see no uniqueness in Jesus except the uniqueness of every real personality. We hold that

Jesus' character was normal in all respects wherein men have admired it. He lived as a Son of God, but simply as all men may live as sons of God. It is the highest nature to do this. To say that he was just, true, loyal, friendly, faithful to death, reverent, hopeful, full of trust in God, is to say what we ought to be able to affirm, and do really affirm, of a host of men and women. Why should he not have been good and true? It is the best and most desirable life. Why should he not have chosen to do God's will? It is the happiest thing to do.

The time has come to say these things plainly. It has been too common to discourage men from the good and normal life. They have been told that it was too difficult; the Golden Rule has been called impracticable; a great and hopeless division has been drawn between Jesus and all other men. He never drew such a line of cleavage. Boys and men have been expected to be selfish and sensual. This abusive treatment, by well known laws of pedagogy, has had its natural effect. Men tend to behave as their teachers expect. It is time to change the treatment. Let us begin to expect the best from men. Let us assume the good as normal, and who shall deny that men,

like plants, will respond to the natural effect of the air and the sunshine.

We said it was normal for the fruit at a certain stage of growth to be acid and green. It is never normal, however, for the fruit to rot. When this happens, conditions need to be changed. So of the life of mankind. To be grown men and women, and yet at the same time to be greedy, arrogant, and jealous, to be oppressive, to be mean and unclean in life, this means that some disease or decay has got into the texture. Something needs to be changed. Perhaps the man has more money than is good for him, or too much self-indulgence and too little work. His selfishness, his pride, his egotism has begun to cut him off from the sources of life. You will cure him as you cure a diseased limb or plant. Restore his circulation, take him up into the sense of the larger social order to which he belongs, stir his good will, put responsibility upon him, and you may save him yet. There is need of "conversion" for all sophisticated and selfish people.

We have seen that there is an eternal pressure toward the good life. Do you say that there is also a gravitation downward to moral decay? You are thinking of temptations and seductions that ensnare men and undermine

character. We answer that the life force is the mightiest of forces. It ever works to lift men up, as the climbing plant overcomes gravitation. You do wrong at your peril, you yield to greed and indulgence at the cost of pain and friction and hurt every time. "The wages of sin is death." In more positive terms, that central Power that makes for righteousness always works within you and in society to frustrate the evil and to demand and expect and finally to obtain the best. You cannot neglect the Golden Rule and do a profitable business, except in appearance and for a little while. Ever more distinctly the laws of trade are found to be the inexorable laws of service. Again and again the unscrupulous, the false, the cowards are bowled over and defeated. The only reputations that last are based in justice and good will. Not Napoleon but Washington holds his place in the high Hall of Fame. In each new generation the mighty lesson of the moral law reaches down closer to the common consciousness of mankind. Only the few knew it in the days of Nineveh and Babylon, but the multitudes are catching it today. Do you want the happy life? Do you desire fullness and ripeness? "Live as a child of God" is the only possible recipe.

One thing more on this point. We say the good life is normal and natural. But everything good in this world costs, else we should never know what is good. It doubtless costs to raise thirty or forty bushels of excellent wheat to the acre, as against seven or eight bushels of poor wheat from the same ground. It costs to raise the best apples with the application of the latest science of horticulture; it costs to build and run a ship of twenty thousand tons. It also costs to get the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace, courage, hope, and it costs to exercise a righteous will. We do not hold that the excellent things are cheap, but we say that they are worth all that they cost. If they are hard, it is harder to get on without them. In one sense they are easy, as everyone finds who has tried them; the work of winning them is more and more a delight. Whoever ventures the experiment of the life of religion or of good will presently seems to himself to be living in a manner that can only be accurately described as "the immortal life." For the life of God can be of no higher quality.

CHAPTER IX

THE KEY-NOTE OF LIFE

SIN, sacrifice, renunciation, sorrow, the cross, have been the great characteristic words of the Christian religion. Their symbolism is to be seen in every great church. We find traces of the same almost pessimistic ideas in the mighty religions of India. We affirm now that the characteristic note of true religion is joy. We may say this without repudiating any truth that generations of men have held sacred.

The ancient Christianity contained an eventual promise of joy and victory. It mainly gave up this present world and made it a sphere of conflict and probable defeat; but it predicted another life where its saints would share eternal bliss. It bade men pray too for the coming of the kingdom of God on this earth, and therefore hinted that goodness would at last conquer here. You may even read between the lines, that the life of the noble prophets and heroes, and especially of Jesus and Paul and the early group of the men and

women who lived in their spirit, was really no such continuous abnegation as most people suppose. On the contrary, no lives of kings or high priests or rich men in their generation contained more satisfaction, peace, and happiness than theirs. If they suffered more than other men, they were nearer also to the sources of joy. In this respect early Christianity was not far away from the highest prophetic teaching of the most spiritual, social, and ethical form of the Hebrew religion.

The parent religion, however, upon the whole, struck a healthier tone in this respect than its child. The martyrdom of Jesus, turned by Paul's ingenuity into a theological system of blood-redemption, emphasizing the idea of sin, gave a twist to the development of Christianity which it is unlikely that Jesus himself with his simple ethical teaching ever foresaw. Christianity, moreover, arose to dominion in a half barbarous world, where for generations the chief business of the ruling class was to fight. The new religion naturally took a militant form to suit the thoughts and conditions of a turbulent and cruel age. It incorporated prevalent superstitions and fragments of oriental philosophies. Evil and good seemed pitted against each other with the issue clouded in

doubt. Inasmuch as the common lot of the poor man involved continual oppression and misery, incidental to aristocratic and despotic government, the wretched and unfortunate found their comfort in looking forward to the rewards of a future life. The price of reform of time-honored abuses, political, economical, and ecclesiastical, in the face of arrogant possessors of power, in a period of ignorance and inhumanity, was persecution and death. No wonder that men thought of the good as playing the game of life against the loaded dice of an unseen and satanic adversary.

Into a world slowly emerging out of mediæval barbarism, into a society evolved out of struggle and war, in the teeth of an almost dualistic form of the hereditary religion, the inner essence of which had hardly been apprehended at all except by a few rare souls, the scientific idea of evolution was precipitated like a gleam of light in a dark cellar. It came at first as a disturbance to eyes accustomed to the darkness. It meant an awakening of the mind and a readjustment of all the furniture of human thought. It actually frightened the believers in the customary religion, as if their faith were doomed.

The new teaching proclaimed that this is a

world that moves by the processes of orderly growth. Man, so far from having been created holy, was seen to be on the way up from a state of childhood. Maturity, civilization, a happy and enlightened society are now before him. The phenomena of discord and struggle are the marks of the costly effort through which everything worthy and perfect is obtained. Different eras succeed each other in the course of nature. The era of strife and tribalism is but one of them. The era of mutuality, co-operation, and international peace is as natural and as sure to come as the era of conflict and hate is sure to be outgrown.

The process of change, marked everywhere else, is seen in the growth of religions, by natural development from the crude forms through which the childish mind gropes its way, to the rational idea of an orderly universe. Never does any form of historic religion stand still. Nowhere is any form of Christianity, for example, found to be the final and completed mode of faith. It is everywhere seen to be changing, as men's minds change who profess it, as their intelligence and especially their humanity grows. Witness the struggle of the Modernists today inside the Roman Church!

The idea of evolution, won through the labor of science, now becomes our clue wherewith, as we better understand the world, we come also to know better the nature and the use of religion. It actually contributes a helpful interpretation to certain elements of Christianity which, at the first approach of science, appeared somewhat incongruous and unassimilable. This is what we should expect. For science, that is, knowledge, could never be hostile to the needs of man's higher nature; this would be to distrust the fundamental unity of life. We have now to show this beautiful unity in a new and reasonable form of faith.

We have said that the early Christians conceived themselves to be living in a world of conflicting powers. Evil was even more real to them than good. Slavery, oppression, and wanton luxury and vice cast heavy shadows. The ideal life was that of the soldier. The noblest soldier was he who suffered the worst ills and died the hardest death. The ideal life was that which seemed to be defeated. For centuries men set before their eyes the example of "a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief," and they forgot that he also had his joys and compensations. "By the thorn path," men

said, "and no other" was the way of glory everlasting. All this appeals to our chivalry. In this spirit men courted martyrdom. We never wish to be free of the appeal to our chivalry and our devotion.

Nevertheless, the old mode of appeal no longer rings true. The reason, which really always longs to say Yes to the heroic emotion, demands now another mode of command. We cannot truly conceive of the universe any longer in the terms of dualism, or of life as a fight with an evil force. The figure with which we interpret life changes. We are not properly fighters and soldiers; we do not stand, a few true men on God's side ranged against the mighty hosts of Satan, the rebels and enemies of righteousness. We do not believe that there is any devil in the universe; we do not believe that injustice is a real power. As lovers of truth we cannot fear error, for it is impotent. Truth is bound to win; goodness is strong. We have shown that the mightiest force in the world is good will. Most men, therefore, faulty as they are, like children, are not enemies of goodness, but susceptible to the persuasions of the victorious good will. The key-note of a world ruled by good will must therefore be joy. Too much evidence of this has accumu-

lated to allow us to doubt it. Gladness and confidence now replace the idea of conflict and defeat. This change of the key-note of religion requires treatment in another chapter.

CHAPTER X

THE WORLD OF THE BUILDERS

THE old idea of the world was an arena of conflict. Life was a fight. The new idea of the world makes it a marvelous work of construction. Vast processes of building are going on. This means that we men, ceasing to be fighters, divided against each other, killing one another, now become builders, architects, engineers, constructors, poets, that is, makers and doers of good. In a real sense we are co-workers with God. We are building up the temple of justice, "the city of light." Translated into secular terms, we have before us the constructive work of civilizing the world. What the few hardly could see in the old days now comes to consciousness for all men. It is no longer a little band of aristocrats to whom the work is committed, as if the few were empowered to rule over and exploit the many! Our work is the work of mankind; all races and colors and tongues are its destined instruments. All are about it, whether they know it or not; they cannot resist, if they would, the sway of the uni-

versal forces that move all for good. Our gospel to all men is to take up the work as willing and gladsome co-operators, partners, and citizens. We cry to our brothers: Live no longer as slaves or mercenaries, but rather as volunteers and freemen.

See now what the life of the free builder or engineer is. It is not to fight and thwart other men; it is to do something more intellectual; it is to overcome material obstacles, to apply forces, to lift weights, to circumvent rivers and mountains; it is a work of constant and intelligent adjustment to nature and to the needs of man; it is to reach actual results for the enrichment of man. Every man who does a legitimate work in human society is such a builder, and the world is richer or happier, wiser or better, for his effort.

There is, however, a side of the engineer's life that necessitates strenuous effort, cost, patience, suffering, and sometimes death. It is incidental to all life; there is everywhere an element of venture and risk. The explorer, the sailor, the life-saver, the driver of the fast express, the bricklayer on the top of the wall, the pioneer in the wilderness, the physician, the mother with the new-born child, a host of people, great and small, in ten thousand emer-

gencies must always be ready both to live and to die. Life costs, and death is incidental to life. There is the same element of risk with the scholar or investigator in telling the truth, with the merchant in standing by his principles, with the mayor or legislator in his devotion to public duty. Here is the short answer to those who think that the world must continue to have war for the sake of discipline in hardihood and heroism. There is likely to be indefinite demand for strong and brave men, and especially for sturdy moral courage.

Sacrifice is not a form of loss; it is a species of exchange and of eventual gain. You give a lower thing, your toil, for a greater value, the new block raised to its place in the wall. You give your money gladly for what is better, your education. The nurse gives nights of service in the hospital that sick people may recover. No man is worth living who, when the clear call comes for a duty or truth or love, will not go, as the race horse goes, with all his might, as, in Browning's story, "How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," the gallant creature at last falls in his tracks.

All that was ever in the chivalry of a soldier or martyr is here. The young Dr. Lazear volunteering to expose himself to the bite of the

fatal mosquito for the yellow-fever experiments in Havana equals any soldier at the cannon's mouth. Lincoln dying at the hand of a mad assassin, was the true martyr rather than the fanatical Christians who threw themselves before Roman spears. Nevertheless, in all this kind of expense, the effort does not consist in the willingness to die; it is essentially a will to live, and to do the uttermost service in living, and only to die if one must. The ideal hero of our new faith is not the man who dies, or because he dies. He is the man who, whenever the end comes, has done his part, has achieved most, has laid the largest blocks of positive construction for the temple of God. Charles Darwin never fought men, and had no enemies; his heroism was in compelling an aching body for years to do its service for the sake of truth. Carl Schurz cheerfully took unpopular risks for the love of his adopted country until a good old age, and thus proved himself the real hero even more than when he led soldiers in the Civil War. "I never sacrificed anything in my life," said the noble General Armstrong, founder of the Hampton School for negroes. In other words, he loved his work.

We have yet to carry the truth of this teaching into all our schemes of education. Men

used to scare the youth away from the good life. No healthy mind takes kindly to the idea of a world of sorrow and defeat. It was only in morbid youth or in hours of moodiness and depression that men and women gave themselves to the régime of the convent. Youth desires true Hellenic fullness of life, the play of energy, noble and constructive ventures. Youth indeed loves still, perhaps too well, to fight, but it is more than satisfied, whenever you give it a task harder and more intelligent and eventful, like Dr. Grenfell's work in Labrador. We offer youth exactly the career that combines in a splendid unity the quest for adventure, the love of overcoming evil, chivalrous daring and desire to accomplish notable ends. All this he may have who wills to redeem the trampled fields of the world from their ancient burdens of tyranny, war, greed, and selfishness, and bring to pass a new and just civilization, a co-operative commonwealth for all mankind. It is harder to overcome evil with good than to fight men in battle, but it is the only effective way to get rid of evil. Overcome ignorance with enlightenment, error with truth, injustice with indomitable honesty, selfishness with disinterestedness and humanity. It is almost a new mode of education to teach this.

This is distinctly to say that the life which intelligent men purpose to lead must be helpful and happy. But you say, How can a good man have gladness in the presence of the wretched ignorance of the world? He can be glad, as the good teacher is glad that his pupils are on the way to learn, and that he has worthy lessons to teach them. How can he be happy, you urge again, where so many are sick and suffer? He can be happy, as the good doctor is, even though his heart is full of sympathy, in the faith that his patients will mostly recover, that he has means to help them, that if death comes (as he expects it to come at last to himself) it need bring no terror. He is happy, too, because most people are not sick, but well. He must be glad because, for the sake of the suffering, the hospital work demands courage, cheerfulness, and hope.

But you still urge, How can a good man be happy, who sees all the injustice and cruelty in the world? He can be happy in the faith that evil is the part but not the whole, the exception but not the law, the process but not the fulfillment. He can be happy, because evil is bound to be overcome, and because no man need ever yield to it so as to become mean and selfish. He can be happy even in the face of

injustice as long as he is doing the deeds of justice himself.

There are side by side in the city two colossal chimneys. One belches forth clouds of smoke and sullies every clean thing around it with soot. You do not judge the power that the engines develop by the mass of smoke discharged from the chimney. The other chimney shows no smoke at all. Every atom of coal is consumed and turned into power. It is the work of intelligent stoking as against ignorance or negligence.

So of the lives of men. One man turns the resources of his life, his mingled experiences of toil and sorrow, or even of pleasure and success, into a cloud of visible distress and complaint. Another, catching the secret of life, takes the same volume of trouble, suffering, disappointment, and loss, and passing it through the hot crucible, transmutes the whole mass of his life into flame and power and light. Who does not know men and women who have performed this seeming miracle? How can we help believing in the reality of religion, when we have actually seen sorrow turned over into the substance of life, into joy, beauty, and unity!

One thing more deserves mention. It used

to be said that the central fact of Christianity was a doctrine of atonement. One perfect man had so suffered that in some mysterious way all men might be redeemed from suffering and changed from sinners into saints. We have been aware that something was amiss with this doctrine. Victims and martyrs and patriots have gone on suffering for hundreds of years. The bad have not often been changed into good men; and the church has not learned very well how to alter men's character. This is still a very uncivilized world, and the need of "redemption" or "salvation" (or, shall we not say real civilization?) is as great as ever.

Yet there was a precious kernel of meaning in the old dogma about "the atonement." It is a profound fact, indeed a general law, that the suffering of the innocent, and especially of the noble and unselfish, has a moral effect on those who witness it, and tends somehow to become an irresistible force to bring about good. This is the spiritual cost of the world, akin to the cost that levels hills, bridges rivers, and founds cities. This kind of cost moves and changes the souls of men and works the perpetual miracle of transmuting evil to good. The Almighty is in and behind it. It is not in human nature to stand by and see inno-

cent children, good women, noble men made to suffer, and not to feel pity or be stirred to do something, if possible, to stop the suffering. The suffering of the world, from barbarism and cruelty, from war and injustice, from preventable fever, from dismal ignorance, is seen now to be a constant spur urging us through our sympathy to build better, to drain marshes, to stamp out disease, to banish slums, to forbid systems of slavery and outrage, to put protective devices in our mills, to redeem the innocent and make all life clean and sweet.

In this sense it was true that, when Jesus was lifted up on the cross, he drew the eyes of the world toward him, and the hearts of the world too. For what end? To the end that every one who feels our common humanity shall highly resolve to let no injustice, untruth, or neglect of his ever weigh down the lives of his fellows: "We will join hands to lift and save men." Every similar sight of human distress is a challenge to all that is good in us. Do you suppose it is of any use to recite Jesus' name in a creed for the man who is misusing his workmen!

Thus every human event plays its part in a unity. Nothing is wasted; no suffering is in vain. Every cry of a child swells the volume

of the call on the great world to rise up and complete the work of a happy and civilized society. The moral force, once retributive, primitive, and divisive, now begins to run, like the modern medical science, not so much for the mere cure as for the prevention of evil. The cost, still heavy, now at last has intelligent and more effective direction toward every kind of reform. We have now the fulfillment and realization of Paul's wonderful word, "All things work together for good."

CHAPTER XI

THE RULE OF "THOROUGH"

THE failure of religion with many who have made a slight trial of it is like the failure of the early electrical lights. They were not quite good enough. "We have looked into religion," men say; "we know about it; we are familiar with its creeds and ritual. We have attended Sunday school and church, but we see no special use in it. It may do well for other people, but it does not work with us." The truth is that most people have merely played with religion on Sunday or looked it over from the outside, without ever making a thorough trial of it for as much as a week. Here is the greatest thing in the world, if it is anything at all; it will carry you further and more effectively than anything else; and yet men dismiss it as impracticable on a mere superficial acquaintance with a cheap or inferior specimen of it.

The churches have largely been at fault (if anyone was really at fault in a barbarous age),

for a generally unsatisfactory impression of religion. They have advertised forms of religion that were mere makeshifts, awkward, cumbrous, and uncomfortable. They have often fairly confessed that their invention was not intended for farmers, or merchants, or active business men, but rather for recluses, for invalids, and the aged. They have as good as told men that the time was not ripe for any general use of religion; this would come about in heaven or in the millennium, but was not now. Who, they have said, could really live in this present world and keep the Golden Rule of religion? Its own teachers have represented it as only an ideal, not an actual scheme of life. Jesus, it was true, had tried his own religion, but see what happened! In less than three years he had come to a violent death. This was the nature of religion, if you really used it. It meant an impossible degree of patience and discipline; it meant ridicule and persecution. All that you could safely do about religion, then, for the present was to pay your respects to its ideals and its ministers and its occasional exhibitions, and agree to try it as soon as all other men were ready to adopt it also. The churches have set up an elegant system of schools upon "the theory of swimming," with a general

warning everywhere posted against venturing into the water!

The fact is that religion, in the sense in which we use the word, is practical or it is nothing. It is a rule or way of life, here and now. It is at least as good for farmers and fishermen and men of business and housekeepers and eager youth as it is good for the aged. If its golden rule is worth while in heaven or in another life, it must be because it is the universal law of social existence. If the art of the good religion, like the art of swimming, would ever be good for all men, it is because it is good immediately for the first man who learns to apply it. All this depends, however, upon a profound and general law of human achievement, namely, that if you adopt any good rule or method at all, you must adopt it in earnest. It will work just so far as you are thorough and whole-hearted in trying to make it work.

There is a very suggestive New Testament word, "Whatsoever you do, do it with your might." Put your will upon it. Concentrate your attention. This is the secret or law of success everywhere. This is what we say to the children, and we never deem it impracticable for them. Have you a lesson to learn? Put all your mind on it, we say, and learn it,

up to the mark of excellence. This is not half so hard as forever to fail in the lesson. It surely takes less time and nerve to do the thing well than to bear the friction, humiliation, and perpetual frustration of slovenliness. Try it and see. You win in the sports by the same rule. You must be all there, heart and soul and strength, as long as the game lasts.

Now, the good religion needs to be used in the same way. We have defined it as an attitude toward all life, all work, and all men. It is the attitude of those who will to live as children of God, or, more definitely, with steady good will toward each other. We are bound to face and march one way, the way of the light and of our ideals. We are bound, even when it is dark as night, still to keep the way that leads toward day. We submit that this works splendidly, just so far as we actually trust it and do it. It works for the man who tries it alone by himself, as well as if ten thousand men were with him. The way goes on, the light appears, power needed comes to us, as if our trolley touched the live wire.

The old religion was at fault on this point, in teaching that men could compound with God like bankrupt debtors. They could keep Sunday and have the rest of the time to them-

selves; they could pay tithes, and be able to keep the rest of their money to do what they pleased with. But we have a religion to offer which no one begins to understand who wishes to compromise with it. It says, "Thy will be done" all the time. It says, All things are of God, that is, the means of service. If it is good on one day to live as citizens of the divine universe, it is good to live so all the days in the year. If God's will is a good will, why do we desire to do anything else? If we can earn part of our money by the means of justice and mutuality, so that everyone is better off for our work, why should we not earn all of our money the same way? In fact, we cannot really *earn* money in any other way; in any other way we should not be earning it, but robbing or hurting someone. You find it delightful to hold some of your money in trust for the sake of the family or for your fellows; why may you not as well hold all that you have in trust to do the best that you can for everyone?

I take it this is the essence of the grand old text: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind, and all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." This spells out thoroughness, whole-

heartedness, devotion, — what Professor Royce likes to call loyalty. It is the principle of life. It is not a matter of mere emotion so much as of will and intent. It is no blind law, but the use of the mind, the intelligence, the common sense is involved in it. It develops enthusiasm. He who follows it takes service in the order of the sons of God, the order of humanity and civilization. The man says, "Yes! This must be what I am here for. I approve, I like the architect's plan; I will undertake it." He begins with a distinct movement of good will; the feeling of love will come fast enough afterwards; but it cannot be forced.

The parable of the swimmer again suits our purpose here. It is of no use hearing lectures on the art of swimming, or dancing up and down on the edge of the water, or even taking half a dozen strokes on a single breath. You never would swim, if you swim as most Christians practice their religion. The time comes, if you want to swim, when you must trust yourself to the water, and not think about anything else except to strike out and swim. You may be still timid; you may not more than half like the exercise at first. But presently you have caught a delightful new motion; by and by you may swim as easily as you walk.

Apply this fearlessly to the crux of the Golden Rule. You will keep the rule, you say, when others will keep it toward you. That is not the rule. It holds good for you, if no one else in the world saw it, and its joy comes, not when everyone else is keeping it, but when you stretch out your hands and trust yourself to go alone with it. No one knows what the good life is who has not taken on occasion the chilly venture of letting himself wholly go into the very depths of reality. Do you learn love otherwise? Is it love merely to wait to be caressed and comforted, and not rather to go out into the storm, if need be, to carry light and cheer; or, a harder task, to keep a steady temper when even your friends seem for a while to have turned cold?

They used to teach us to say "Thy will be done," but they also taught that the will of God meant the annihilation of selfhood and personality and the renunciation of a man's dearest desires. We understand the will of God, on the contrary, to mean the highest and best possible thing for each and for all, not renunciation but completion. To say "Thy will be done" is the setting forth of our noblest ideal of fullness of life. What do you desire, at your best, for your child or your best friend?

This is "God's will" for yourself as well as for the friend. What do you want for your city and your people? You want perfect justice and civilization. This is exactly what we mean when we say, "Thy will be done."

There is, however, at times a sense of resignation in view of what the good will must be. This is because everyone must on occasion accept the common lot of men, and take his share of cost or sorrow or pain. And yet, when the worst seems to happen, we desire nothing different from that which has its place in the plan of an infinite good will. Thus we conceive that we never suffer alone. God is with us through it all. This is the meaning of the ancient faith, "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth."

A single line of demonstration runs through the growing list of splendid biographies of discoverers, inventors, investigators, statesmen, men of letters, educators, lovers of men, illustrious women. These are our witnesses to show where success lies, namely, in disinterestedness, whole-heartedness, loyalty, thoroughness, in a good will, in the essence of religion. So far as they had this, they won character, freedom, friendship, gladness, lasting influ-

ence. No one ever really tried the life of good will and found it to fail.

What a terrible and tyrannical conscience, someone says, you are setting over a man! On the contrary, the harsh and nagging conscience disappears when once we have enlisted "for good and all." The case is like that of the young bride, swaying at first between hopes and fears. But when once the new life fairly begins, she was never so happy before. So, when a man fairly takes the great religion in earnest, he presently discovers that he had never known before how good life could be. "How strange," such a man lately said, "that everyone does not see it!"

Let no one think that a man must be all the time aware of the working of his conscience. Like all the faculties, it tends to work best unobserved and almost as if by instinct. It is an organ of health, like one of the senses; do not irritate it and it behaves well enough. In fact, the beauty of the religion of the good will is that it does not consist in a thousand and one rules and regulations. Jesus loved to teach this. The good life is a spirit or attitude, and you know at once when you have lost it. You know too when you have put up your trolley to the wire and the power flows again. The one

thing is to keep the good will, to turn it on and use it toward everyone with all due intelligence; this is delightful. It is like what it would be for a boy to be let into his father's shop and told to use the tools and the power as he saw his father use them, and to make perfect and beautiful things.

The most perilous spiritual disease, next to selfishness, is conceit, pride, arrogance, egotism. It belongs on the side of the animal world, for we imagine in our childishness that we do things ourselves, that we deserve credit and praise and titles and compensation for our little achievements. We think we deserve at least part of the credit for what we do. The simple truth is that we deserve nothing at all; we only worry ourselves whenever we struggle to get desert and credit. The world does better for us than to give us our dues. It is a world of good will or love. The power, the thought, the beauty, the patterns, the plan, the will itself, and the ideal all come from the fountain of being; we create or originate nothing. We receive, and we have the joy of sharing and passing on all that comes to us.

We have nothing, therefore, to do with looking back on our work and pluming ourselves upon its excellence. The one thing is to go on

and do better work, and express larger and more effective good will. We may be glad in our work, we may enjoy every bit of beauty or goodness in it, but it is never ours to appropriate. It belongs, as we belong, to the Commonwealth, to the mighty universe of being. Our part is so to use it that happiness and welfare may abound. We are like the boy who plays on his school team. His success is his only that he may add to the winning power of the others.

This view makes conceit and egotism ridiculous, and arrogance impossible. It is the only view that lets a man's soul rest in peace, free of envy or jealousy. We are never working for credit or pay. We are only doing the work of good will in a world that calls out more loudly for good will than for anything else. "It is required of a steward that he be found faithful." That is all.

CHAPTER XII

THE DEMOCRATIC GOSPEL, OR THE AVERAGE MAN

WE have promised to set forth a good religion or gospel for the people. We mean President Lincoln's plain average people, whom, he affirmed, "God must have loved or He would not have made so many of us." There is much skepticism at present as to whether there is such a gospel. It has long been preached that there are only a few that will be saved. Not preachers alone have said this. It is in the current literature, in Bernard Shaw, for example. We must have a "superman," it is said, to supersede such poor creatures as men are now. Is not life a battle and a "survival of the fittest"? You never then can expect more than a little of real excellence, like the rare gold or diamonds. Science seems to say something like this.

Even the praise of famous men, exalting as it may be, often works to the discouragement of ordinary people. There was only one unique Christ, they tell us. No one else can come near

the stature of his life. What is the use of all the millions of little and feeble lives in the presence of the kings of the race, the kings of art and poetry, the masters of wisdom and goodness?

Let us not be so fast in despising and discouraging the common people. The kings only rise out of the common stock. The great art and music find appreciation among a host of common people. The best science indeed is busy in showing the world how to multiply and democratize the best things. Is the good wheat scarce? We have learned how to produce as much of it as man wants. Is the good fruit rare? We are bringing it now into every market. There is no man so poor in America as not to be able to read the Bibles of the world. Already a multitude of people, without the aid of a college education, are entering upon their spiritual heritage and are sharing the thought of the noblest leaders of the race.

Who now are the "average" or ordinary people? Let us all for the purpose of this chapter count ourselves into this democratic body. Who among the millions of us expects to be enrolled in the Hall of Fame? Some of the blades of grass are a little taller or stouter, and some shorter and more slender, but we treat them

alike; they have a common destiny, if only to feed higher life.

It is a good practice of the wise trustee who marks his securities down to their par value. They may be worth more and yield an extra dividend, but whatever fluctuations occur in the market, so long as they keep up to par, the holder has no need to fear. So let us all hold our lives. We will rate them as so many ordinary lives, equal for aught we know to other lives around us. We will not reckon that it is more important for us than for other men whether we live or die; whatever is important for us is important also for others.

We see at once certain wholesome compensations for "average people." In the first place, we have no undue and vexatious responsibilities for other people's affairs or for the welfare of the world. It is not necessary for us to grasp after honors and titles, or try to take the higher seats. Let us come back into line with the fundamental, although often forgotten, principle of democratic government, namely, that "the office should seek the man and not the man the office." If our fellows want us, we will do our best to serve them, but we will not look upon office as a right, and we will resign it as soon as we cease to be useful.

Nothing is so dreadful as to hold a place that one does not fill! We will not care, as Jesus said, to be called "Rabbi" or Master. One recalls Plato's humorous story of Ulysses, who after having had his fill of princely ambition in this life, is rejoiced for his new incarnation to draw the lot of a private citizen.

Again, as average men, we are relieved from the peril of special disappointment at meeting trouble or loss. Superior men and women might expect special privileges and exemption from trouble, or they might hope for favoritism. We average people merely look for the common lot of mankind. It is a mingled lot; there is sunshine in it, but not all sunshine. There are sorrows and hurts as well as joys; there are seeming injustices in the common lot. We expect this mixed life, and do not dream of running away from it to some exceptional climate; we do not purpose ever to pity ourselves for what men everywhere must bear, namely, the great common law of cost that underlies the universe. We suspect that we could not be fully men without it.

It is suggestive that the noblest men and women, and specially the man whose life has been called the most typical human life, have all cheerfully taken the common lot, as if it

belonged to them. It is certain that no man who cheerfully yielded himself to the common law was ever bowled over by disaster. The world herein behaves as veritably God's world, — not, you will observe, in that there is no dramatic or stern element in it, but that this element is made at last to do the marvelous bidding of beneficence. The tragedy of the world proves not to be defeat, but the march of the processes of the victorious goodness.

We are ready now for a serious question. Are you not making life too meek and unassertive, like a sort of oriental quietism? Do you leave room for the eager play of youth, for Anglo-Saxon energy, for the joy of struggle and conquest? We answer this question by laying down the average man's rule of life. It is this: To do his best and make the most out of his average talent. He is not responsible for another man's best; he does not have to live the impossible life of some historical personage, — an Isaiah, a Buddha, a Jesus, — or to accept the ideal that he finds in a book. He must only do his best with his own ordinary work. But this means to apply all the intelligence and conscience and energy or good will that he has. Need any full-blooded American complain of this stent? Here is the combina-

tion of the simple or quiet life with thorough activity, fullness of being, and the absence of worry.

There is a man, for example, with a tiny farm of some twenty acres of ordinary land. But the man is doing his best with it. He has cleared his little grove of underbrush and insect pests; he has set out an excellent orchard, he has the best of gardens, his cottage is surrounded with vines and flowers. You remark on the place as you pass. The man is making a good living; no man needs more than such an average farm. Let him put his whole self into it and he is better off than the exceptional and wealthy neighbor, with hundreds of acres of land that he takes no trouble to till.

It is well to stop long enough to see how large the assets of the average man are. Most people forget to take an account of stock. Indeed the man hardly exists who has only one talent. Thus, the ordinary man has as good senses as anyone wants; he hardly begins to use any one of his five senses, his sight, for example, up to the limit of its power and growth. See what Helen Keller was enabled to do with the development of the single sense of touch! The ordinary man has also a fair measure of skill. Train any boy a little, and if he puts his will

into the work, he can make a good carpenter or mason or machinist or tradesman. Many average men or women have the gift of music and can learn to sing.

The ordinary man has, moreover, certain fundamental and precious moral qualities, a sense of justice, a faculty of conscience, the perception of truth. A prominent white minister, addressing a body of negroes, told them that they inherited "three great characteristics of their race, — reverence, loyalty, and patience." What an equipment of power the speaker attributed to these average negroes! There is not an office or shop where loyalty and patience, with even a little skill, are not highly marketable commodities. The world cries out for millions of loyal and faithful workmen, black or white or brown.

The average person also is just as likely as the poet or the philosopher to have the power of love. I mean the power to bestow love and make love shine out as from a candle. Thousands of humble wives and mothers carry this gift of love, and there is nothing that the world needs so much. Let any one bring this single faculty up to the height of its development, and he will make the darkest place light. The fact is, there is not so much difference between the

endowments of great and of average men as is often supposed. The difference is in the use of will, and especially of good will. Let all the little blades of wheat have water and sunshine, let them keep busy, living and growing, and there will be no great difference at the harvest between big and little.

We have so far spoken as if it was well for everyone to think as modestly as possible of himself and keep his value marked down to par. This is true. A man has nothing to do with setting his own value; he is never in a position to estimate it rightly. But the time has come to say that, in another sense, a man cannot think of himself too highly! This is in the same sense in which he ought to think highly of other men.

We need here to see clearly the relation of each man to the magnificent and divine universe-order to which, whether we know it or not, we all belong. We have already shown that the very essence of religion is that a man belongs to something greater than himself, that his work and life count and are significant, along with all other creatures, in a mighty upward movement of progress. No man belongs to himself; he is held in the grip of the order and motion, like a planet. To know this and be glad

in it is to be a free man. There is no other intelligible or practicable conception of the world. We sometimes call it the idea of solidarity; it is the kernel of truth in every discussion of socialism; it is at the heart of the coming religion.

Let us illustrate how this idea works to set a new and correct valuation for every man. There is a tiny grain of sand blown about on the beach. It seems to be only a bit in the realm of chaos. It has no obligation or responsibility, except to follow each stronger wind that whirls it. But one day the grain of sand is taken with other sand and made into cement and built into the wall of a great house. The sand has now and henceforth become a part of a structure; it has an obligation to hold fast and keep the wall; it has become as precious and necessary as every other part of the building.

There is a bit of pigment in the soil so small that no one knows it is there; it seems useless. Some day the rootlets of a plant take up this atom of pigment and straightway, in the subtle alchemy of nature, it goes into the tint of a rose. It belongs now to the texture and beauty of the rose and is responsible to keep its color.

So with the life of the average man. He may

think himself of no account or use. He is alone, a possible "tramp" on the road. Careless of himself and irresponsible, a kicker against society, he may have contemplated throwing himself into the river. But some day the grip of duty or love catches him and takes him over into some form of the great social structure. He marries and has wife and children to care for; he takes service with a great railway and puts on its uniform; or volunteers in the life-saving service and patrols a stretch of wild coast; he joins a lodge or a church. Almost invariably something has now happened to the man, provided he takes the new bond in earnest and gives himself to it. He is beginning to live in a universe; he feels upon himself the great bonds of obligation that connect with the driving wheels of the world. He may no longer throw himself away; he must sell his life dearly for the sake of his children, his comrades, or for unknown men wrecked on his shore. He is just an average man still, but where he stands alone in the dark as watchman, where he marches, or moves his engine, the whole family of man and the eternal powers that watch over man are concerned with him in the fulfillment of his trust; the guardian stars shine down their approval of him. There-

fore we say, though a man may never think highly of himself as above other men, he cannot possibly think too highly of himself as bound up with all humanity in the structure of human society and mutual service.

Men often think that the course of history depends on certain gifted heroes and leaders, the Washingtons, the Goethes, the Emersons, the Carlyles, the Tennysons. They miss the great poets and statesmen, and they cry that the life of the age is running out in decay. They see the ugly scum on the top of the social whirl of New York or London, or they visit the dreary tenement districts; they hear the old world cries of class and party war, and they turn pessimists about the progress of mankind. They forget that the life of the world in every age consists in the lives of a host of true-hearted, ordinary people whose names hardly ever appear in the newspapers. You will find them in every village. Such as these stood back of Washington and Lincoln and made their efforts possible. Such as these gave their hearts to the poets and helped them to sing. On these ordinary people, yet obeying the law of their being, as upon the vital corpuscles of the blood, the health of every land and age depends. The coming religion will make a new

demand for the best work of the average man, and at the same time set the proper value upon it.

We finally judge and value men, not by their size and stature, but by their quality and humanity. The Almighty Intelligence, we surmise, does not care for the bigness of His stars, does not value the great Kohinoor more than the tiniest diamond still hidden in the earth, does not care for the flower of a century plant more than He cares for the violet. So also we reverently think that any one of the uncounted, unthanked deeds of courage and mercy, gleaming out of humble places over the earth, may signify as real beauty and joy in His thought as the sight of Socrates drinking the hemlock or Jesus dying on the cross. Surely, where love is there is the beauty of God.

CHAPTER XIII

THE "EXPERIENCE" OF RELIGION

THE knowledge or "experience" of religion is much nearer to people than they commonly suppose. The ordinary view of religion made it a mystery and exceptional. It was associated with peculiar signs and manifestations, with the play of powerful emotions of contrition and humiliation, with ecstasies and visions. The few and not the many were capable of these exercises. There was always danger that, being forced under provocation of excitement, they would ensue in a relapse of fatigue, melancholy, or indifference. These manifestations lay indeed close to the physical or animal side of life. If religion consisted in such things, many of the noblest men and women must go without religion. Worst of all, the sensational form of religion, as in the case of the converts at a negro camp-meeting, might have no ethical or social value whatever.

Let us pass over to a different and much more profound as well as universal order of

facts. In the first place, we all have knowledge or experience of the mystery of power. We use, direct, and control it, when we lift our arms, or when we steer a ship, or when we press an electric button. We do not understand what makes power in its various forms, but we know how it behaves. We do not create it even in our own bodies. It is ever in and with and about us. More and more we come to learn its laws or habits and to trust it. We build and plant and travel and carry on the myriad works of civilization by its means. Say that it is the power of God or not; call it what we please or call it nothing. The universal fact we know. This is the constant energy of which Herbert Spencer said we were surer than of anything else, from which all visible things doubtless spring.

This brings us to the deeper mystery of life and consciousness. We are its sharers and its children. It breathes in us and through us, as if it sprang out of the hidden sources of being. It lifts us at times to high levels of joy. We may think that we know much about it and its myriad forms, but we know nothing of how it comes about. We generally think it is good and not evil; most of us want more of it. Call it the divine life if you will, or

let it go unnamed. Yet we still know it and experience it, though we cannot define or explain it.

We share also in the mystery of thought or reason or intelligence. It radiates in the world like light and we follow its paths. It rises into majestic conceptions of a universe; it handles prodigious figures and builds up mathematical systems. It ever works toward order and unity. We do not so much seem to create our thoughts as to observe and record them, as if we were docile pupils, listening as well as we can to a Master-Worker, whom we only begin to understand. Call this universal mind, gleaming out in the crystals, uttering itself in ants and bees, written in the motions of the stars, rising to its lofty flights of art and poetry in mighty geniuses, the thought or mind of God, the universal poet and thinker, or call it by no name. Yet we all share more or less in the knowledge of the fact; we experience something of the mysterious intelligence. If we are open-minded toward it, the law is that more and more this intelligence flows into our minds.

Moreover we live in a world of beauty. To say order and unity is to begin to spell beauty. To feel harmonies and symmetry, to know

rhythm and the everlasting motion of waves of light, of sound, of electric motion, brings us close to the realm of beauty. To live most fully is to move in rhythm; to think most richly is to think upon the beautiful lines of order. There is something of this wherever we look, in the dances of bright butterflies, in the vast curving sweep of the flight of the birds, in the play of every species of fish in the sea, in the color and grace of flowers, in the rounded limbs of a little child, in the face of gracious womankind. There is that in the world which seems to rejoice in its work, and at our best we rejoice with it. Call it what you please, call it the Beauty of God, or let it go unnamed, nevertheless the universe produces it and always urges us to open our eyes and believe in it.

There is that in us which we all share, that we name conscience. Nothing is more wonderful and mysterious. It is not less but more wonderful in the fact that even the animals have at least some dim sense of it. It is a social and binding force in us, never letting us be content to do as we please, to do violence to our brothers, to be cruel to our neighbor, to rob and oppress. This universal urgency in us at times sets a single man in his integrity, like

a rock, fearless in the face of a mob. It bids men and women go to the block, to the cross, to the grave, without fear of consequences. Obeyed, it fills a man with a sense of rest and peace. Refused, it leaves a man's soul restless and dejected; life and happiness seem to ebb out of him.

We cannot think of this mighty urgency that rests upon us quite as we think of force. It is not indeed altogether easy to call force impersonal or material, but we cannot possibly call the power, that makes right, impersonal or material. It is in the same class with mind and beauty. It bears the mark by which we know persons and "spirit," as contrasted with atoms and matter. We might be safe in calling this spiritual force in us, and through life everywhere, by the highest name, God. But here too, whatever we call it, or if we have no name for the mystery, we know the fact. We have all felt its mystic pressure, as if a voice spoke to us saying "Do this" or "Avoid that." We all have experienced the rest and satisfaction that follows wherever we have obeyed this inner voice. If someone had called to us out of the depths, "It is well with you, my child," we should hardly have felt more at ease. Is not this the knowledge or experience

of religion? Is anything more profound or spiritual? Is anything more practical as well as delightful? Is an epileptic seizure or a state of hypnotism or a trance holy, and is not this sense of an obedient and satisfied conscience far more holy?

There is another fact as impressive and spiritual as the experience of duty. It is good will or love. One of the greatest passages in the New Testament says that "Whosoever loveth is born of God and knoweth God." This does not mean the love of God, as apart from any other true love. It distinctly means such love as one man bestows on another, on his wife or child. The old writer says that we know the divine love in no other way except as we love one another. He teaches that all love is one. In other words, love is the most universal and mysterious fact in the marvelous world. This is what we tried to show in an earlier chapter. You know nothing of the universe unless you come to know its highest value, — good will or love.

It seems here at last as if we could frankly call love by the highest and most spiritual term that we know and say, "God is love." But we will not insist that anyone give the great fact a name. It is enough to see that, on the

most personal side of life, the world behaves and answers to us as if a living, loving person were at the heart of it. This is a matter of common observation and experience. In the hour of your true love, when your heart goes out in any word or deed of loving service, in every act of complete good will toward your own child or a stranger, when your whole self goes with the motion, you know, as at no other time, what full, personal life is. Nothing can hurt you in that hour. You are at the height of your being. Nothing can make you afraid. It is as if the Spirit of the universe were with you and you were at one with the whole.

Now, no man creates this sense of oneness and perfect life. It is no more your own work than is a chemical reaction, when the elements of hydrogen and oxygen combine to form water. In both cases it is the infinite nature, or God, who does the work. You cannot reach the joy of love by any act of simulation, or by imagining it. You must be all there and hearty in your good will. On the other hand, however painful outward physical conditions may sometimes be, nevertheless, whenever you give your best self in the act of love, the inward rest and peace hold good. We do not hesitate to say that this is the knowledge or experi-

ence of religion in its noblest form; everyone knows something of it. The difference between one man and another is that one makes this experience of religion the purpose of his life, while with the other it is the exceptional incident, from which he falls away into more or less confirmed habits of indolence and neglect. Well for him who sees how great the experience of true love is, and henceforth, having known it, makes it the rule of his life!

"For life, with all it yields of joy and woe
And hope and fear, . . .
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is;
And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost
Such prize despite the envy of the world,
And, having gained truth, keep truth: that is all."

CHAPTER XIV.

ETHICAL MYSTICISM

THE world is in the process of learning a new form of mysticism. I venture to call it "ethical mysticism," if I may be allowed immediately to explain this difficult expression. I take it that the mystic is the man who is conscious of God. This word has been so badly abused in the direction of egotism and fanaticism as almost to spoil its value. I merely use it in passing in order to emphasize a reality. If God is at all, it must be good and only good to be conscious of this reality. To be thus conscious is what religious people have called mysticism. But they have never associated this word with ethics, or conduct and character. If there is any sense in it, however, mysticism, that is, the consciousness of religion, must be ethical, and practically good for the welfare of society.

We happen to have in an old Scotch writer the very definition of religion that we need to make our meaning clear, "Religion is the life

of God in the soul of man." Let us say that the life of God is power, is consciousness and intelligence, is beauty and joy, is righteousness and justice, is good will or love. These are all so many forms of the One Life from which we all spring. Suppose now that a man uses power, is instinct with intelligence, marches with every prompting of duty, stands like Wordsworth or Thoreau entranced with the gladness of nature, thrills with love and gives his will to the good will that binds the stars and orders the nations. Suppose he thus opens his heart and mind wide for the flow of the manifold life of the Universe: this is religion.

Religion is threefold. It is a magnificent conception of a divine world-order to which we belong; it is the feeling, or emotion of trust, gladness, reverence, appropriate to the wonderful thought; it is the kind of conduct, obedient, generous, friendly, devoted, that fits both the noblest thought and the most exalted feeling. Religion then is, at its best, the life of God in man's soul, flowing forth to the service of man. This is what I mean by ethical mysticism. The good life is bound over, with all useful and social activities, as if by the belt that connects the wheels of a mill with the sources of power.

We suspect the time is fast going by when anyone can have real spiritual experience of the presence or love of God except under ethical conditions. The mysticism of the self-centred individual or egoist has had its day. The time properly comes in the life of a child when the parent desires something more than that the child shall merely desire to be petted and fondled, least of all to be treated as a favorite. Is the child ready to do its part with the other children in the work of the home or the farm? The most loving parent will be weary of the caresses of the selfish, lazy, and disobedient child. But men have thought that they could command delicious spiritual experiences, alone with God in closets and cloisters by fastings and prayers, apart from their fellows, exempt from the laws of a world of mutual toil and helpfulness! As soon expect running water in the house without making connection with the great main. The natural law of the spiritual circulation of the universe is that the peace of God will flow into the life of faithful and friendly men. But it cannot flow to the unfaithful and unfriendly. It is not merely a relation between the individual and God; it is social; it binds each man with all men. For failure to see this many are

skeptical of the reality of religion. Because it will not run in the shallow channels of their ill-will and self-will, they think that it does not exist.

We have come to a simple understanding of the vexed question of "authority" in religion. Authority here is like authority everywhere else. There is no absolute or infallible authority for finite and fallible men. Authority, touching science or history, or any side of the vast universe, is always only approximate. It is enough if it serves for practical purposes. So with religious authority; no Bible unfolds the whole mystery of human existence. No word of any absolute teacher or pope solves our fresh problems of conduct. No authority can take the place of a man's intelligence or compel and overpower it.

Authority is of the nature of light. In this sense there is plenty of authority for all that we need to know of religion, — I mean for its great central ideas and the axioms that underlie life. I have tried to show that this kind of light is about us and within us. We see that truth is good and ought to be uttered; we see the nature of a duty and that we ought to do it; we see the binding quality of love and that we disobey it at our peril. We see, when our

light is the brightest, that this world behaves as a spiritual universe, where "no good thing is failure and no evil thing success." We all know at least a little of the spiritual facts of faith, hope, love.

Is there, then, no special authority of any Messiah or prophet? Yes and No; as in every other department of life. Though no man of science can make us believe against the evidence of our senses or our reason, there are great leaders and teachers in science who see more than we see, who can set us at their point of view and show us things which their telescopes and microscopes have revealed. So there are great spiritual geniuses and teachers whose presence seems to carry light. They have experienced more deeply than most men, or have thought more clearly, or have lived on the heights. We listen gladly whenever they give us their veritable experiences. They help us most when they assure us of what we partly see now. There are only a few things on which these great teachers insist; they are the most common things. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

The deepest facts of religious experience are essentially alike, under all variety of forms.

The Jew or the Confucian or the Christian has each the same testimony to the validity of duty and love. Someone tells us of his experience of the fellowship of Christ. Another describes the same kind of fact under the imagery of the thought and presence of an angel mother. Dr. Edward Everett Hale used to tell a story of a Japanese friend who in a storm at sea said he "was not frightened, for Buddha was with him and he was with Buddha." Do you say that this difference of language discredits all these stories as alike vain? We think just the opposite; namely, that each was a form of the experience of the encompassing life of God, in whom, in every act of essential trust, we rest secure.

CHAPTER XV

THE NEW THOUGHT OF PRAYER

CERTAIN important and interesting questions now arise. What is prayer? What is worship? Is there any use or reality in prayer? Is there any true sense in which a rational man may have "communion with God"? For in the past all these expressions have covered great sources of strength and comfort for men.

It is clear that much which we have associated with prayer and worship is fast passing away. Indeed men have not commonly prayed at all, but they have only "said their prayers." They have thought of prayer as a sort of magic, through the recitation of which they might procure special favors. In the face of the broad fact which Jesus perceived, that God makes "His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and His rain to fall on the just and the unjust," men have continued to offer up prayer for rain or for sunny weather, like the early "medicine men." We are coming to

see that, so far as we are truly children of God, we do not wish to be treated as favorites. We will not ask for any special indulgence, even if we thought it possible to obtain, for example, that where our neighbor's ship must ride in a tempest, our ship sailing the same seas shall be exempt from storm.

The fact is that we are happy and content to be citizens of an orderly universe, in which we can depend on its laws and trust in the steady working of its vast friendly forces. We like this better than to be subject to arbitrary and special interpositions, in favor of some or in punishment of others. We approve of a world in which we can procure blessings by obeying the law of work and cost, and can procure nothing by crying out and cutting ourselves with knives, like priests of Baal. This is surely a more divine world than the introduction of any semblance of arbitrariness or willfulness would make it.

We have shown that real religion is founded on facts. If prayer, then, is real, we shall discover what it is from a study of the facts of our consciousness, the most real of all facts. Let us now contemplate one of the most profound of these facts. We have noticed that there is that in us which, like a voice, seems to

prompt or to stop us in any issue of duty. This is what Socrates called his *daimon*, or divinity. Let us become acquainted with this inward monitor. We can think of it as the actual person, the ideal of what a man should be; it is our best or inmost self. It is doubtless in the process of development, and at first we only dimly know its features. We may not always be sure what the voice really says to us. But times come with us, if we watch, when the active or outside self and the inner self are one. These are the hours of the motion of obedience, or good will. These are the times when our inner self comes to light and reveals itself. We are not complete persons when there is a discord of wills within us, but only when the inner self and the active self are working in harmony; at such times we grow. Body and mind and soul are at rest, or again are equally ready for action. This is health, or wholeness, in which every faculty shares. There is almost a new science of health, bodily, mental, and moral, involved here. For the body can never be at its best unless the man is at his best, in inward and social harmony.

There are striking facts of experience when we come into unison with our friends, in the hours of our love and our service. Even the

loving thought or memory of a noble and whole-hearted man or woman, absent from our sight or departed from this world, the recollection of his face or his words, the consciousness of what he would say by way of counsel or consolation, has power at times to bring the same inward unison, or peace, or the will to live and serve, of which we have just spoken. "What would my father say?" "What would my mother tell me?" At our best, there is a heightening of life and activity in opening our minds to those thoughts. These movements of the inner life are surely as real as any play of the molecules or the ions which the physicists watch, and they are vastly more important and practical.

We have hardly said "God" yet, but we have been touching the facts which lead us up to the contemplation of God. Must there not be something in the universe higher than the inner or best self in each of us, something that causes in us mighty throbbing aspirations after justice and truth, at the recollection of the noble lives? These experiences of the inner self are themselves like so many manifestations of a universe life, whose waves of intelligence and feeling beat upon us like sunshine.

I believe that in all these moods of our higher life, of aspiration, willing obedience, trust, gladness, affection, sympathy, and generous memory, we enjoy spiritual communion, yes, veritable communion with God. So far, however, it may have seemed to be communion through some kind of mediation, through the consciousness of our best self, through the help of good and true men and women, or through "the thought of Christ," as many would choose to say. Is it not possible to go farther than this? We have already suggested that we cannot really stop here. In those highest moments of inner harmony and good will, we have a consciousness exactly as if we were at home with the Life of the universe. In the absence of all fear, in the sense of trust and gladness, in fullness of life, we enjoy what is meant in the remarkable teaching, attributed to Jesus, when he describes life in its highest terms as a "oneness," or unity. "We are one with each other and one with God." All this is natural, rational, and ethical. The experiences of this sort do not come when we are asleep and dreaming, but when we are most awake and most sane.

So much for the fact of communion with God. How much does this cover? See what

we actually do at times, and might well do more often. We seem almost to carry on a conversation in the depths of our hearts. We bring to our best self, as to a divinity, or an oracle, the questions and problems of life, our cares and solicitudes. In the highest mood of open-mindedness, obedience, trust, and good will, everything stands in the clearest light; our brightest thoughts come so, as if spoken by another; crooked things straighten into form, new meanings appear out of confusion. An hour, at our best, in this atmosphere of intelligent intercourse does for us what days of blind groping in the mists of conceit and selfishness cannot effect. Again, as before, the conditions are rational and ethical, and therefore spiritual. Shall we not say that God, or the spirit of the universe, speaks to us at the height of our lives?

The use of words in prayer now appears. In the best communion with friends, or with our best selves, or directly and consciously with God, there is more than feeling or harmony. There is thought behind, and the law of thought is expression. Words framed, or even spoken or written, help express thought and give feeling its proper flow. This is what Tennyson means when he says:

"Speak to Him thou for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet,
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

True, words are feeble, neither are they always essential, but they surely help and direct our thought; and the noblest worship or communion demands the whole man, heart and soul and mind.

This brings us to the subject of prayer in the sense of petition. It is a pity that "the highest exercise of the human spirit," as President Eliot of Harvard College has characterized prayer, should be so closely associated with the mere asking for favors or benefits. We have just seen that prayer, in its largest sense, is not so much the effort of the petitioner, as it is the attitude of the waiting, listening, and willing mind, seeking to know what is truth, or duty, in other words, what God bids. It is inspiration, or the receiving of life, quite as truly as aspiration or desire. It is indeed properly the complete circulation, the inflow and the outflow of the highest life of man, his affections and his will. Its law is freedom of motion and utterance.

There are obviously whole lists of things which the atmosphere of devotion or commun-

ion makes it impossible to include in prayer. The young child might be supposed to prattle to his father about the toys, the presents, and the sweetmeats that he desires. Better so than to be afraid to come to his father at all. But no sensible child, coming into sympathy with a noble parent, continues asking for trifles and the indulgence of his whims and appetites. He trusts the parent more and more, and scorns to ask for things that the other children would be obliged to go without.

There are, however, in God's world grand objects to seek, and worthy to be desired with all one's heart. We see and know the real values in the hours of our best love and our sympathy. We cannot desire too much the welfare of our friends and our children, of our town and our country and the family of mankind. There are long lists of beautiful and ideal blessings that we see and seek. Why not put them into the most fitting forms of words?

Prayer now means more than talking even to God. It means the motion of the whole life and the whole man. Words only formulate it and make it clear. I want the best education for my children; I may well think this out in my hour of clearest spiritual vision, and express in so many words what kind of education,

physical and moral, I desire. But I must pray also with my hands and my skill, and put my energy into my prayer, and perhaps save money for years, and spend it for the working out of my prayer.

So likewise when men venture to pray together in great churches for the peace of the world. Let them beware, or they merely say vain prayers. If they pray with genuine desire, if they cannot abide murder, hate, and war, and are bound to have peace, let them be ready to lift up their voices and hearts, and cast their votes too, when the next war scare arises. This only is prayer.

We can see now that prayer is effectual, as we had hoped to find. If this is a universe, if it is God's world, if in some deep sense "all things work together for the manifestation of the sons of God," then it is a world in which all real and deep needs, all noble desires, all aspirations for the building up of the kingdom of God tend always to come true. The spirit and good will of the universe works with our spirits and our wills to bring the ideal and desirable things to pass. All manner of beautiful illustrations are at hand to show that this is a valid conception of the world and of the relation of man's true prayers, for liberty, for order

and law, for social justice, for the uplift of the level of human happiness, for the consummation of all man's rational desires. In this sense prayer is the most religious outpouring of the whole life of a man toward the procurement, in every form, of both the individual and the social good.

CHAPTER XVI

CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELIGIONS

THE question will be asked about the coming religion, what its attitude is toward other religions, and especially what relation it bears to Christianity. Is it Christian? To this last question we must answer both Yes and No.

The religion which we have described is certainly not to be identified with any single or distinct form of Christianity. There is not an historic creed which expresses it, or under which one, whose mind has not been sophisticated by the perversities and casuistry of a theological school, would recognize it as latent. Most of the creeds, in fact, are made up of propositions, such as the Trinitarian formula, or of miraculous occurrences, like the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection. No untrammeled modern mind would think of formulating his actual thought, much less his dearest convictions, in the terms of the Nicene or the Apostles' Creed. But men say these creeds, as they have been taught to say their prayers,

as an exercise of conventional or traditional religion.

Historic Christianity, moreover, has been mostly a religion centering around a single person, its founder. It has exalted the name of Christ, not only as "above every other name," a sort of spiritual emperor, but as so far apart from all other names as to be equivalent to another title for God. The time has come when men ask questions, and must ask them, as to what we mean by the unique exaltation of the name of Christ, or the person of Jesus. We know something of what earlier men meant by their worship of Christ. There was a theology of a lost world and a rebel race, of the necessity of the expiation of sin, and therefore of the miraculous appearance, the suffering, and the redeeming death of a divine mediator. It is enough to say here that the modern mind does not and cannot take this scheme of thought seriously. The new question is, what thoughtful men now really think and mean when they use the traditional words of their creeds. It is easy to repeat the ancient words, "The Lord Jesus Christ." In what sense is Jesus "Lord"?

For example, Jesus is not Lord to men of modern education in any church, in matters of

thought, much less of science. Jesus believed with his people in demoniacal possession, in a day of general judgment, in an almost Manichean separation of the good and the bad into heaven and hell. Who today dreams that the New Testament teaching, or the Bible teaching generally, could be expected to tally with the prevalent modern thought of a universe, in age-long processes of development? Now men who think today do not follow Jesus, or take him as Master, in any article of their faith which has to depend wholly upon his *ipse dixit*. We may as well face this fact. Thus, in all recent discussions of the hope of immortality, it is not enough to say that Jesus preached it, or, more accurately, habitually assumed it. Men must be told on what grounds it is probable that the nature of man is immortal. In other words, the hope of immortality does not rest on any single and unique historical event or revelation, but on the essential character of true manhood.

Moreover, very few men actually make Jesus their Master in the conduct of their lives. We speak here of the men in churches. They habitually treat his teachings as impossible. Grant that they probably mistake Jesus' teaching when he says, "Be ye therefore perfect," where he was not speaking of perfection in

detail, but of thoroughness in purpose; grant that when he says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," he meant the will rather than the emotion. Most men not only give up these great texts altogether, but they commonly confess that Jesus' teachings and ideals generally are impracticable. They then proceed to accuse themselves of heinous sin, worthy of "eternal death," because obviously they do not live up to an impossible law! It is not our part, we are told, to obey, so much as to believe that Jesus' blood will save us, even when we do not obey. Others frankly go further and set aside Jesus' precepts. You must not be meek, they say, but strenuous; you must not turn the other cheek, but fight; you must not give your money to the poor, but save and invest it; you must take care for the morrow and bear anxieties for your children and your business. When a Tolstoi therefore presumes to take Jesus as his Lord of life, when he advises everyone to dismiss worriment for the future, when he calls it wicked for nations to fight, the Christian world holds up its hands, and a notable ex-president and churchman writes a paper to show that such a man is a fanatic! My point is that Christians do not really take Jesus' teachings as the law of their lives. How, then, is he their Lord?

I said, however, that we might also answer Yes to the question whether the coming religion will be Christian. It seems easy to grasp what central truths Jesus himself cared most about. He cared most for justice and mercy and the brotherhood of man. He cared immensely that men should forgive injuries and bear no ill will. He made the ethical teachings of the prophets about righteousness central. He took the dearest of the figures of the national religion, and made the Fatherhood of God central. He put the emphasis of life, where the emphasis belongs, on the reality and the development of the spiritual nature. He loved the good life.

It is in no way important to enter into the theoretical question, whether or not Jesus absolutely succeeded in living the good life at all times; that is, whether he never was vexed, or impatient, or lost his temper, or failed in complete good will toward anyone. We certainly cannot find in him a miraculous being, man and God at once, finite and infinite, fallible and infallible at the same time, sent once for all on a supernatural errand, to die for a race of rebels. We as certainly find a man with the conditions and limitations of a man. It is enough for our purpose that here is a man after

the type of reality, devotion, good will, whom we all love and admire. If it is Christian to believe in this type as the normal and coming type of mankind, if it is Christian to adopt this type and plan one's life accordingly, if it is Christian to think the law of good will is the most practicable of all laws, then the men of the new religion will gladly be counted as Christians.

A brief reference to the teaching of Paul's epistles may serve further to illustrate our meaning. There is a deal of difficult theologizing in Paul. He labored with a kind of metaphysics, as in the Epistle to the Romans, to prove certain propositions about faith, about the work of the blood of Jesus, about the office and place of Christ in the hierarchy of heavenly existences. Men have labored as hard as Paul, in trying to understand what he meant, and have not necessarily become either wiser or better. But Paul takes occasion in the famous thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, to sum up the substance of his religion in a few memorable sentences. Here are the law and life of faith, hope, and love. Is this Christianity? Is it sufficient? Is it good enough, whether one ever reads Paul's theology or not ? I think Paul seems to say, Yes.

If this is so, in view of such a splendid ideal, then all the world will be glad to be accounted as Christian.

Historical Christianity has had a reputation for being exclusive. It has proclaimed itself to be the only and final religion. It has attacked all other faiths, and branded them as heathen or infidel. It has had a long and most shameful record of bloody persecution. In this respect again we can never be Christians. The coming religion is comprehensive. There is, in fact, a new science known as Comparative Religion. It has chairs in the best orthodox theological schools. It shows the working of man's inner nature, feeling out after reality under diverse and even grotesque forms. It searches the Bibles of many peoples for the noblest utterances of the religious spirit. It studies the secret of the religious life in the stories of many kinds of saints, in India, in Persia, in heterodox churches. It surprises the world with the fact of the deep likenesses under manifold manifestations of religion. It renders all exclusiveness and sectarianism preposterous.

Thus, it is evident that, according to the exclusive canons of dogmatic and historic Christianity, Jesus was not a Christian at all. He

never could have recited or understood any one of the historic creeds. His greatest teachings came out of the heart of Judaism. There is not one of them that is not traceable to old Hebrew law or prophet or psalm. The noblest Christianity is only a new form of the best Judaism, with its highest values set in heavier type. The new flow of life, the humanity, the warmer faith, the freedom from rabbinical narrowness, the atmosphere of enthusiasm, constitute the essence of the new religion. If Paul, for example, had really known the kernel of his own religion, if he had understood the great central facts, as set forth by Micah and others hundreds of years before, he never would have persecuted the early Christians, and there could have been nothing to which he could have been converted. As a matter of fact, Christianity was a new and necessary form of religious development, through which Paul and others of his time got a fresh sense of the spiritual reality of the world. The men of the twentieth century are again stretching upward toward a new and wider reach of vision.

We see at once the attitude which the coming religion is bound to take toward all forms of religion. The coming religion sets a new emphasis, as the greatest of the prophets did,

as Jesus did, as Paul did, as all the great lovers of men have tended to do. It says, "Live the life of good will. Live as children of God." But it sets this old and ever fresh emphasis, as men in early times were not prepared to do, with a fresh grip, in its new conception of the universe. The whole universe, it says, goes the way of goodness. Good will is its law. The good life is here and now. The whole world, not a single part of it only, is its province.

Historic Christianity swung away from and combated the old Greek ideal of beauty; it cultivated the ascetic habit, and despised the body; it poured contempt on "the world," that is, on the common lot of man, his business, his art, his struggle toward civilization. The new religion leaves out no worthy ideal; it ennobles the body and preaches the law of its normal health; it reverences science; it understands and uses all clean pleasures as its ministers. Over all it holds up the universal law of good will. What hurts life, embitters it, narrows it, defeats its main intent, works injustice, this only is wrong. There is no sin against God that is not a hurt to man. There is no wrong done to man that is not a wrong to religion.

It follows that we who accept the new religion must be tolerant and sympathetic toward the men of all forms of faith; we must be frank in our judgments, and we are bound to say what we think. But we are bound to be essentially respectful. Our habitual method is not to combat or destroy, but to construct, to build up, to give aid and comfort. We see good and truth wherever truth and good are. We are glad to find among men who are shy or even contemptuous of us, whatever common elements of goodness there are. It is our business to interpret the valid spirit of religion under the harshest forms, and to understand other men's religions better than they understand ours, if possible better than they understand their own. This must be possible, if we possess the central point of view and the good spirit.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CHRISTOCENTRIC IDEA

THE great Christocentric question now recurs in a new shape. It is a question of practical propaganda. It is said that a world religion must have some single person or founder whose special cult gives it currency. Jesus, Buddha, Mahomet, are thus cited as historical proof of the need of a person around whom devotees and sentiments may rally. The fact is, however, that the history of religions, like the history of politics, can never show us from the past what the future will be. When American democracy took shape, it was predicted, on the basis of historical evidence, that it could not persist. Did not history seem to demonstrate that great aggregations of government always depend on personal rule and on the principle of monarchy? We know better now. Neither is there any lack of popular sentiment toward the changing heads of our gigantic republican government.

We do not, indeed, at all disparage the high value of sentiment toward a noble person. The human figure doubtless translates the conception of the life of God, behind all persons. Thus many men have habitually come to use the name and the ideal figure of Jesus as synonymous in their minds with God. They tell us of the communion which they enjoy with Christ. We throw no doubt upon the fact of a state of real exaltation which they have learned to stimulate by the use of this personal means of suggestion. We only say that there are other means to the same exaltation of mind. We insist in the case of all exalted moods of feeling upon one test of their worth and reality; it is the ethical and human test. The question is, whether or not the exalted and happy mood of personal attachment gives a man a fresh grip upon the realities of justice, sympathy, helpfulness. We urge, also, that there are men and women who may not imaginatively feel a quiver of sentiment at the name of Jesus, or any other historic personage, who nevertheless may and do catch the same kind of high feeling at the sight, or the thought and memory, of true-hearted men and women whom they have known. All good friends thus become genuine mediators to translate the love of God

and bring about a religious attitude. Men straightway go on to do braver and more honest acts in the memory of such personal friends, — of a mother, a teacher, a good minister or physician. Thus I call it an uplift of religious emotion when the city of Boston paused in its toil to pay its tribute of reverence on the occasion of the death of the late Bishop Brooks.

The play of personal sentiment in religion is the same as it is in the realm of patriotism, of art, or of letters. Certain personal names stir our associations and give flow to a fresh stream of interest, zest, emotion, disinterestedness. The national heroes, from Washington down to the latest popular idol, serve every orator, writer, or teacher who desires to warm the popular heart. Light, life, and love spring from the great names and deeds. The more of them the better; the more honorable and effective sentiment, the more excellent character is developed.

The coming religion is not likely to be less rich in the possibilities of personal attachment than were the religions of the past. It will simply be more democratic. Not one only, but a whole procession of noble leaders and teachers marches before our eyes. Not one single type of character, but many beautiful

types appear. Not a single life of Christ only will be taught to children and youth, but a library of the lives of the men and women of good will, who have made the world better, will be at hand for constant use to persuade and inspire.

Moreover, the ideal known as "the Christ life" in a very true sense will remain. Its substance is the idea of something infinite and godlike at the heart of humanity. It is indeed vague, like all ideals; it is never quite the same in any two minds; it is composed of elements drawn from different sources and from acquaintance with different persons. It is nowhere, for instance, today identical with the actual life and person of Jesus; for no one knows just what Jesus' life was in detail. But the image of Jesus, wherever men have heard of his story, his faith in God, his patience, his devotion, his concern for the poor and oppressed, has entered into the ideal of "the Christ," that is, into the world's thought of the most perfect man. In a very free but real sense this will remain among the permanent treasures of mankind, and may well continue to be called by the familiar name. Once dissociated from the bondage of an exclusive creed, no Jew, no Buddhist, no Confucian, no

Mohammedan would ever object to the use of this guiding ideal.

The coming religion is already being proclaimed. It is the substance of the most effective and most inspiring sermons in many a church. A growing number of leaders of religious thought have already accepted its main emphasis. All creeds are being interpreted into its simple terms. The best men of different religions are drawing closer together and recognizing their common faith. Missionaries who went to India and China to convert the "heathen" to dogmatic Christianity, are beginning frankly to tell us that the people of Asia will never receive a religion, at once alien and irrational, such as Christians once vainly tried to foist upon them.[1] The coming religion of Japan and China and India, they tell us, must be a religion close to the lives, the best thought, and the sentiment of the native races. This is really to say that there will be one great common religion, broad and comprehensive, for all the families of man. The larger religion is everywhere thus growing out of the older forms. It will never be exclusively

[1] See, for example, "India: Its Life and People," by Rev. John P. Jones, or "The Spirit of the Orient," by Prof. G. W. Knox.

preached as the only religion. But daily the emphasis is being changed in the direction of its distinctly ethical and humane values. Once firmly placed, this emphasis can never be altered.

Schiller, in his drama of " Nathan the Wise," brings together Saladin, the Mohammedan, Richard, the Christian king, and Nathan, the Jew. The three men with their three exclusive religions begin their intercourse with suspicion and hate toward each other. But under the pressure of the common life, the common experience of peril and toil, the sight in each of the common nature, the common faith and heroism and chivalry, the three men become one. Their three religions were never really diverse, but only forms of the one deeper religion behind all the forms. This is the religion that is everywhere coming to light, as fast as the men of many races come to look into each other's eyes and to see the gleam of the common humanity.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

THE pressing question about the church is not whether it will continue to exist or not. The question is under what forms it will continue. As surely as religion is imbedded in the human soul, as surely as it yields a fundamental and necessary conception of man's place in the universe, as surely, then, as he is at the same time a social and a religious being, there must continue to be some suitable organization and social embodiment of his religious life. There is no permanent human interest, political, economic, educational, artistic, musical, that does not instinctively tend to socialize itself for its more effective expression. If you have the theatre for lovers of the drama, you will certainly have some kind of church for the lovers of religion.

There is a good deal of panicky complaint about the desertion of the churches, and especially by the working men. A very strong case, however, may be made out that churches,

faulty as they are, have never had a greater influence over the world for the direction of man's higher life and for civilization than they now have. It is probable that there was never any long period, even in the fervor of the early Protestant reformation, when the whole population of any land frequented the churches every Sunday. Regular attendance at church, on purpose to hear sermons, seems to have been a provincial fashion; the Catholics never required it. When the priest or minister compelled people to church, sometimes, as in old Massachusetts, with the whip of the secular power, there is little to show for the moral and spiritual gain that came of such enforced church-going. It was compatible with cruel customs, tyrannical laws, and much religious indifference. It held its own, not so much because men were living in an age of faith, as because they lived in an age of superstition.

It is time to enquire what we mean by a church. We may say, in general, that *the church is an organization or fellowship of people for the furtherance and expression of their religious life.* Ideally all the people of a community ought to be thus organized together, in which case the church would express the spiritual aspect of a people, as the state ex-

presses their political activities. As a matter of fact, however, we are obliged to content ourselves with a very broad and rather loose definition of the church, so as to cover a great variety of ecclesiastical phases, many of them quite partial and inadequate. Thus, we speak of the Catholic Church, the Jewish Church, the Christian Science Church, the Mormon Church. These and others are social attempts to develop and express religious thought, feeling, and life. We may be skeptical about the genuineness of some of them, but we should like to believe that all of them have a kernel of usefulness. We may well ask whether the people in them would be better men and citizens, if they were left without any form of religious association?

There are several great and perennial uses that a genuine church ought to serve. Perhaps most people would say that the first of these is "the worship of God." This is an ancient and traditional opinion. A community of people ought, it is said, to pay their stated respect of praise, reverence, adoration, and gifts to the Master of their lives; otherwise punishment might befall them, as for the crime of *lèse majesté*. Modern men, however, cannot easily take this idea of worship very seriously. They

have ceased to think of the Infinite Life after the fashion of a jealous, oriental monarch. The higher their conception of God, the more impossible it becomes to think of Him as attaching importance to ecclesiastical rites and forms, to the bending bodies of worshipers, to recitations of psalms or anthems of praise. The greatest of the Hebrew prophets, in their zeal for social righteousness, were long ago outgrowing the thought of a God who cared for gifts, for the blood of rams and bulls, or adoring words.

There was something real, however, behind the old conception of the duty of worship. We might still call it worship, if we may be allowed somewhat to re-adapt the meaning of the word. Let us say, then, that the first great use of the church is to establish a cult or habit of religion. No noble habit of thought, or feeling, or action, comes without nurture. There are suitable forms of words that convey worthy and ennobling modes of feeling. We are better for having learned these words in our childhood, even at the cost of some effort; our memories are richer for being stored with noble psalms, verses, poems, and mottoes. There are moods of feeling that have to be cultivated, which do not come without the proper atmosphere; this

is what we mean by saying that religion always needs some kind of a cult, and that the church has its use in establishing exalted habits of thought and feeling.

There is such a cult of the family religion in the best homes. It consists in every genuine form of affection, in the morning and evening greetings, in filial respect and thoughtfulness, in deference toward the aged, in habits of loving service, in friendly thoughts, words, and deeds for guests and strangers. This is the cult of domestic religion. It depends upon a somewhat costly atmosphere of good will; it comes by learning the familiar forms and habits, through which good will is exercised.

There is also an appropriate cult of patriotism. Boys and girls do not learn to love and serve their country without any nurture, or the forming of habits of patriotic thought and feeling. There are certain ideas about one's country, noble pride in its history, dreams and ideals for its future, sentiments of loyalty and devotion toward it, which are bred in the minds of children in the best homes and schools, by force of habit, and through a certain cost and practice. Patriotic poems learned by heart and often sung, bits of great orations of noted statesmen, such as the Gettysburg Address,

even the repeated ritual of the flag, and especially the instinctive imitation of habits of thought and feeling, and especially of public-spirited and generous conduct, touching the city or the country, as practised by admired teachers and parents, tend to the nurture of patriotism among the youth. There is a great present need of such nurture of patriotic emotion, for the idea is abroad that everyone may look to his country or city, as men used to look to their gods, to bestow favors and privileges. We need, on the contrary, to form habits in our youth in the direction of obligation, duty, willing service, loyalty, and devotion for the civic and public good. This is a form of religion; it needs nurture and education and many wise and patriotic teachers.

The social nurture of religion is similar. A man goes now and then to a church as a curious stranger, and he may or may not feel the force and use of the cult, or "worship." But let him become somewhat familiar and sympathetic with it, let him try to understand what it means. He finds a prevalent habit of thought about the universe, as wonderful, divine and orderly, about the Lord of all life as beneficent Will, about the life of man as an order of happy and friendly service, about the good life as

normal and gladsome. He hears noble forms of words, ancient and modern, that tend to convey magnificent thoughts. He finds a certain mood, or attitude, or habit of feeling, trustful, fearless, aspiring, affectionate. Again and again he subjects himself to this mode of feeling, as to a sunny atmosphere. The lonely man, coming out of his individualism, touches elbows with his fellows, strangers before, now neighbors, kinsmen and brothers, in this higher mood of social feeling.

It is a rare man who does not need some cultivation of his higher nature; it is a rare man who can give himself this kind of nurture alone and unassisted. It is essentially a social habit of thought and feeling. The man enters thus into the relation of a fellow citizen in the universe. No one can too often feel this mood and enter into this attitude. Till it become the habitual attitude of our lives we are not yet our best selves. This habit, both of thought and feeling, is essentially religious; it always rises toward the consciousness of the eternal good will. We feel the bonds of our religion, not merely as brothers, but as children of the great Parent of life.

The second constant and growing need and use of a church is as a species of university.

The church takes up the work of education and carries it to its culmination and its unity. Everywhere else we see life in parts and detachments; we learn sciences and languages, we pass through various and strange experiences, we catch side-lights upon life, we are perplexed with its myriad many-sidedness. There is no need so great as to bring the bits and the parts together, and interpret the wholeness of the meaning. The church cannot teach science or economics or government, but it is set to testify to the integrity of life, that all truth is one, that there is nowhere any possible division between business and humanity, between morals and politics, between science and religion.

The church is set forever to take up each man's shifting experiences and show him how to relate them together and to turn them into significance. The church considers man as a person, a child of God, in the midst of a costly process of spiritual growth. The teaching of the church must help him to see the secret of the good life, which assimilates everything into terms of faith, courage, sympathy, helpfulness. All manner of great words and beautiful lives contribute to the treasury of the church and make it a university of the art of life. There

is a continuous story of the lives of the men of good will, all of whom illustrate the doctrine of the divine universe, which every item of knowledge and experience goes to make up.

The church plays the part of a university for old and young. Even young children may be able to feel, before they quite understand, the significance of its teaching. Men never become so old as not to need the service of an interpreter to bring their lives into order and significance. Parents need this kind of teaching in order to bring up their children to know the great lasting values. The work of the church in the training of children and youth, on the side of their ideal interest in ethics, in humanity, in faith and hope, is everywhere receiving a new recognition. What other existing agency is there to carry on this work? The only important question is how to do it vastly better than churches are doing it now. There can be no doubt that they will learn to do it better, as soon as they free themselves from the shackles of a mass of unwieldy and conventional traditions about Bible study, and give themselves the liberty of a vastly larger store of inspiring biographical material than they have ever had in the single life of Jesus, and the few figures that dimly appear in the Old

and New Testaments. That these Bible stories are of inestimable worth is only the greater reason for making connection between them and the men and women who are today making modern history.

The third great function of the church has been too often forgotten. Men have made much of two sides of religion, good thought and high emotion; but what are noble thought and high emotion good for, unless they carry us over into conduct? This is the test of their genuineness: "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

The popular churches of the world have so far mostly contented themselves with their ritual and their prayers and hymns. It was enough if the sacred words, "thrown out at" certain dim and grand ideas, were properly uttered; meanwhile men have been sent away to shift for themselves, without any ritual of religion, as to their conduct toward one another. To be right in religion was to be right in ceremony or in belief, but not necessarily to be right by the Golden Rule. Even when the church has prescribed a sort of puritan code of conduct, it has been made highly individualistic. All sorts of social wrongs have gone on around the churches and

by the action and countenance of their members. The church has not usually thought that its proper business was to meddle with slavery, or special privilege, or the crowding of tenements, or the ignorance, disease, and shame of other people's children.

The coming religion is threefold and all round, or it fails to be religion at all. It is good thinking, and good feeling, and also especially good conduct. We do not indeed prescribe how church people shall bring their faith and their good will to bear upon pressing social injustices, upon race and class prejudice, upon the government of cities and nations, upon the temperance and the peace of the world. All we say is that the connection must somehow be made, and the social needs of the community and the world must be effectively met. We do not believe a real church can exist without laying its hands, or at least the hands of its members, on the pressing tasks of our modern civilization. The church that puts its emphasis on the words, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," must go forth to do what it sees in its vision. If there is a valid social cult or religion, it must ensue in social activities and social righteousness. It is intolerable that men should come together upon the heights of their

lives in grand common thoughts and feelings, and separate to be straightway mere irresponsible individuals. Now comes the test of their religion. What can they do together to make their high thoughts real?

It is impossible to tell what form church life is destined to take. It seems certain that there are now altogether too many churches; no little community of a few thousand people needs a dozen separate churches. Protestant sectarianism has come to be specially wasteful, preposterous, and divisive. In the only sense in which a religious worship has any use, there is no room for a dozen exclusive varieties of it. There is room, indeed, for diversity of form and minor details of opinion, but for no sectarianism. The main thing at present, however, is that the leaders of churches should clearly see what their churches are for. How shall we effectively form habits of faith in God and faith in man? How shall we cultivate the attitude of good will to all? How shall we best teach men the facts of the divine universe, and interpret their lives into hopeful significances? How shall we turn the hearts of children to love the good life? How shall we apply the moral and spiritual power of our communities to procure social justice and happiness?

Whoever asks these questions in earnest will find the way to their answer. If the better way shuts up some churches altogether, if it alters or even abolishes certain modes of so-called "worship," if it involves new and costly work in teaching the young, if it changes hours of service and requires more expenditure of time, if it commands all to say more and more "we and ours" instead of "I and mine," wherever the way leads, it is a good way and no one will ever be sorry for having taken it.

What will become of the present army of ministers? No one can tell. It is impossible to believe that it is well to preach so many thousands of dry and conventional sermons as are now preached every Sunday to innumerable straggling congregations. It is a wholesome sign of the times that fewer candidates for the ministry offer themselves. It is likely that a growing economic pressure will act largely to reduce the number of paid ministers. There will be, we suspect, an increase of such voluntary and disinterested service of the church as has usually been cheerfully offered at those times whenever religion has been a matter of vital and growing interest among men.

There are, however, great careers of useful-

ness possible for genuine ministers. There will be an everlasting demand in the great towns for men who can set forth in real prophetic fashion the infinite values of human life, who can translate ordinary life into terms of faith and hope, who can show the way, and persuade their fellows to do the deeds of the new civilization.

There are notable careers, also, before the well-equipped man who will take a whole community as his parish, whether in town or country, and devote all his powers to serve its ideal interests. The country needs thousands of such men, helpers, friends, teachers, leaders, inspirers, men of unfaltering and indomitable good will. We may safely sum up the subject by saying that there is doubtless actual call and need for more real ministers of religion than at present exist, and if they are truly ministers, that is, servants and helpers of mankind, they will not be suffered to starve.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MODERN RELIGIOUS VIEW OF EVIL

A FLOOD of difficulties seems sometimes to surge up against the foundations of religion. What do we know about God, or any reality back of the shifting play of matter and force? How do we know that there is any deeper reality? Why, if there is a good God, in any sense of the word, does He not make Himself plainly known to everyone? If He cares for us, why should He permit any doubt of His care? Why, if He cares, and is good, and has infinite power, does He let the world suffer untold miseries? How can infinite goodness exist, with power to match it, in a world which contains Africa and its slave trade, Turkey and its abominable misrule, Russian prisons and Siberian exile, London slums, the white-slave iniquity, and infernal lynchings in America? Could not even a wise and good man manage the world better than this? May not the power behind things, whatever it is, be somewhat helpless before such a world as we live in?

These questions are forced upon men's minds by the pressure of all manner of facts, and it cannot be irreverence to bring them to light. To ask them belongs to the intelligence of man; they are man's cry for truth, justice, mercy, reality. To be afraid to ask them would be superstition and actual atheism, as if one feared that his religion was hollow and his world only stuffed with straw. To ask them is to trust that there may be a satisfying answer; it is more reverent to face the questions than to stifle or evade them.

It is a curious fact that everything in the world goes with a rhythmical motion. The light comes in waves; so sound comes to our ears. As the bodily health has its tides of fullness and emptiness, so the mind sways in the strength or the feebleness of its convictions. We surmise that the spirit of the universe could not possibly make us aware of reality, without these costly processes of contrast, change, and reaction. Language itself is no continuous flow of intelligence; its pauses and even the harshness of consonantal sounds are as necessary as the smooth and singable vowels. There is an everlasting principle of contrast through which the mark of emphasis is set upon the higher values of thought, and the in-

telligence is urged and prompted. The law of cost, everywhere present, pursues the mind; labor and pain, tormenting questions and gloomy doubts are a part of the mode of its movement toward its victories of assurance and conviction. We may reverently suppose that all this is involved in the nature of the universe. It is no arbitrary will of God that makes it so. It has to be so, like the relations of numbers, which God could not will to be otherwise. Wherever in life are the joy, the significance, and the content less because of the toil and risk of the infinite quest?

A vessel is sailing along a perilous coast in the depths of a fog bank; the pilot cannot see a boat's length ahead; angry waves break here and there and reveal the ugly reefs; one looks out on a misty and dismal fragment of a world. Suddenly a transformation scene occurs; the wind has shifted, the fogs vanish, the sun appears; the rough and dreadful coast smiles with green fields and forests; the harbor entrance shows itself around a splendid headland. Which picture presented reality? They were both true; but the greater included the less and explained the other; the greater scene was there all the time, although invisible while the fog lasted. The fog and the peril

were only a phase of the voyage; not the pilot and the sailors, but only the passengers, were terrified.

Life is forever giving us this lesson. We learn a part at a time; now and then we look up and catch a hint of how the parts fit together. We see a difficult phase of life and are anxious about it; we wait and presently we catch sight of the wholeness of life, and are comforted. This is the secret of the ancient faith; "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." The clouds pass, the dust settles; the hills and the stars and the sunshine abide.

I have suggested the presence and the law of rhythm and contrast. It is the nature of intelligence that everything can be translated into either positive or negative terms. The same facts and figures can be made to work either way, to debit or credit, to loss or gain, pessimism or optimism. You can translate the dullness of pupils, the continual complaints about the schools from employers and parents, the provoking inefficiency of teachers, into the failure of the educational system. You can find facts to translate your friendships into distrust and marriage into unhappiness. You can make out a black case against democracy or any other system of government. You can

find sins enough to write a wretched indictment against the people of any race or color. You can sum up all the facts with the negative sign, and turn the history of mankind into a record of injustice, cruelty, and futility, with hopeless death closing the wearisome story. Go as far as you like with this process.

You turn now, whenever you will, and you only need to alter the emphasis of a few of the facts, to recognize certain forgotten values, and correct your perspective, in order to reverse every pessimistic conclusion. The facts show that the children are getting on in the schools; most of them are hopeful pupils; here and there you discover a genuine teacher beyond all price; the system of education is not good enough, but it is good and not evil. So, likewise, the friendship which begins to fail under the chill of suspicion, warmed with a little love, fairly blossoms. Marriage, which taken with the ugly handle of selfishness was proving a bestial relation, taken with honorable regard, becomes a bond of everlasting beauty. The democratic theory of government only needed more of the democratic spirit behind it. The men and women of the despised race, regarded with a little humane respect, are found to be full of idealism, latent conscience, and

social will. The history of mankind, read with proper emphasis on its true points of value, so far from being a mere record of corruption and inhumanity, turns out to be one long and triumphant march upwards, from the level of the beast to the development of men and women as true, as brave, as noble, as open in their minds and large-hearted, as any "superman" that the genius of a modern story-teller ever invented.

The truth is, mankind are naturally and incurably religious. No negative arrangement of life proves credible, except for a few unfortunate astigmatics. It is not because in one case you take the ugly facts and in the other case leave them all out and mix a different variety of paints for your picture; it is because the negative story leaves out the biggest things that exist, — the sun and the stars, justice and good will, faith and hope.

"Yes," someone says, "if we could only be sure of God, and that He cares for us!" And yet you may be sure of God all the time. For you learn of God as you learn the reality of your friends. You know your friend by observing the spiritual laws of friendship. You do not know the friend merely by outward signs and through the senses, or by the laws

of matter. You probably never altogether know him; there is a residuum of his nature always beyond you, acts that you have not the key to explain. But here and there gleams of beauty shine out of the inner being of the man and make you trust him; you become more perfectly sure of him through years of mutual approach. You might any day leave out the significant costly passages that have marked the course of your love, and out of the commonplace remainder and your distrust over the unknown elements of his life, reduce your friendship to zero. You know better than to do this. Friendship is its own proof; you know if you have tasted it.

You ought, by the same kind of signs, flashing out in the most precious hours of your existence, sometimes from the face of a living man, or from the memory of a saint, often also without the thought of any man, to be equally sure of the reality and eternal presence of God. You act towards your friend, whose inner self you never saw, as if he were good, and you experience the reaction of reality. You act towards the life of the universe as if it were goodness, and you also experience the reaction of reality. At such hours you live what may well be called the "eternal life." How

should anyone ever expect to know it unless he keeps its laws?

The field of religion is not different from the field of science. The processes are much the same. It is all one universe. The intelligence, reaching out for facts, presses forward from the facts already found, in trust that more facts will verify its guesses. It is faith or confidence in each instance, not blind but reasoning faith, — the divine "imagination" that Mr. Tyndal has praised. We talk of matter and atoms and electricity, but the words are as mysterious as "truth and reality." No one ever saw the matter or the force; we deal with them only through signs; they speak to us in a kind of language, and we believe in them. We might even doubt their existence, and we should still have to behave as if they were real! It is so in religion. We had better conduct ourselves as if justice, truth, goodness, love were the eternal things, for the universe certainly conducts itself so. It reacts to meet every act of confidence in its living goodness.

The fact is, there are a set of facts within us quite as real as any facts that we count and measure and weigh. We are at least as sure of the workings of our own minds and the inner self as we are of the reports of our senses.

The duty and the need of justice, the quality of true love, the vital action of trust or faith, both towards man and towards the universe, are indisputable facts involved in the very essence of our being. The demand of the mind for order, for unity, for intelligible significance, so that the universe shall be found worthy of our quest for truth, is among the most solid facts of our intellectual furniture. The response of our higher nature to the touch of the facts of the spiritual realm is exactly akin to the response of our minds to the great mathematical axioms and the laws of numbers.

It is these inner facts of our being which forever forbid us to be content with any futile or negative theory of the universe, either on the side of matter or on the side of mind or spirit. An inward necessity urges us to think that our bodies are in some valid sense real, and we, the selves within them, are real; that the vast visible world is real, at least in the reality of the relations that make it a universe; and so too that the life behind all, rising out of the depths of being into beauty and good will, is equally real. It is life, mental, moral, and even physical, to think thus, and failure of life to think otherwise.

But why does not God give man all these

great facts, if they are facts, without so long and laborious a process of development? This is like the question of the child, impatient to be a man without having first been a child. The infinite power could not, we surmise, make a man without the process of childhood, nor a Christ without the original, childish, barbarian, and animal ancestry. Is not the man worth the cost of his childhood, and the Christlike men worth the cost of all the ages of animalism? We do not need to think of the animal, the child, or the barbarian as futile or wicked or unhappy. We have no business to judge the unfinished thing in the process by the standard of the finished product. The process was never bad, judged merely as a process ; the animal was not bad as an animal, nor the child as a child. The thing in the process becomes bad, only when it stops going on to the next stage of its being. The boy becomes "bad" when he remains a boy instead of becoming a man. The Turk or the Czar is intolerable, not in the light of the world of Nebuchadnezzar, but in the world of Emerson and Tolstoi. The increasing horror of mankind over human atrocities is the signal that the day of their departure is at hand.

CHAPTER XX

CONCLUSIONS

In the face of all doubts and difficulties and in our blackest moods of depression there remain certain great facts of experience, which constitute religion and which nothing but religion accounts for. We have obeyed duty at times, when it seemed to promise us nothing but trouble. We have found, strangely enough, that the best things of life have invariably come so. No price would tempt us to throw out of our lives these moments of costly duty. We have also followed the bidding of that love, whose law is not to get but to give, and the whole world has been illumined in consequence. Seeking not to get but to give, saying not "I and mine" but "we and ours," friendship, marriage, parenthood, the civic and national life, the relations with all kinds and conditions of men, have been made to shine out in a new and wonderful light.

We have also tried the experiment of a rational trust. We have trusted our children,

we have trusted our neighbors, we have trusted human nature in strangers; we have trusted the laws of the universe, and believed that it is a universe; we have gone on trusting in the days of disappointment and sorrow; and again the world has responded majestically to our confidence in it. Men have treated us, on the whole, better and not worse than we expected, and strangers have even surprised us with their humanity. The law of trust and good will has held good. Our failures, our real troubles, our serious losses have come on the side of our egotism, our selfishness, our narrowness and suspicion, never on the side of our love or our trust. This is to say that the world has actually behaved to us as God's world.

We are not speaking here of passages from the lives of the "saints" or of people who have been considered pious, or of facts that men commonly call "religious." We refer to a large, common and democratic, human and most religious class of facts, which many men are shy of talking about at all. Few know how frequent they are. Thus, a neighbor lately told me what the world knew nothing of, how he had struggled to pay every dollar of his debts with interest, and how the peace of a good con-

science had come to him when he had accomplished his task. Was not this "the peace of God"?

Our effort has been to show and illustrate the fact that men are not less but more religious than they suppose. There is one memorable modern life which clinches our argument, namely, the life of Abraham Lincoln. In no conceivable sense can this be described as a life of conventional religion. Here was no member of a church; there was not a creed in the world to which he could have given his assent. He was caught up into no seventh heaven of mystic ecstasy. But this plain man, at his best, in his faith in goodness and truth and justice, in his trust in God, in his trust in and love for the people, walked before men as a veritable son of God. On his ethical side there seem to have been moments of his life when, as truly as any of the mystics, he was one with God. No American of any church would be willing to go to a heaven where Abraham Lincoln and such as he would be shut out. The truth is, that the whole world is at heart already on the basis of the new religion.

Certain conclusions arise from another and even more spiritual, yet quite universal, class

of facts. I refer to those which belong in the realm of peril, sorrow, trouble, pain, and bereavement. Men have always longed for some consolation in view of the sorrows and losses of life. Does the infinite Power, Life, Good Will, care for us, and make significant use of our lives? We are able to reply that it seems as if such care, significance, order, and use were the rule and not the exception. We may not be able, as men once tried to do, to discover any kind of special providences, wherein we get exemptions for ourselves from the common lot, or have particular revelations in which God makes Himself known to us and not to others, but we have found something better, more consolatory, and more democratic, namely, a deep general law of all human life. This law is, that no bitter or sorrowful experience ever comes to a man, which may not be so taken up and used and translated, in the solvent spirit of good will and trust, as to enter not only into the innermost treasure-house of the man's spiritual possessions, but into the common wealth of faith and sympathy and power. There is a mutuality in the bearing of sorrow and trouble wherein no man ever needs to stand alone. There is no actual loss, for no good thing is ever failure.

The fact of the death of Jesus, immediately taken into the consciousness of the race, and turned into an earnest of a broader humanity and a firmer faith, is the standing illustration of the working of this principle. But it is typical of what every true man and every good woman has had plenty of occasion to find out. The lesson tends, the more often it is repeated, to rise to the level of great spiritual exaltation. It comes not only to the people of sentiment and quick impulse, but it comes to the men of cool and practical common sense. Such men will tell you, in their confidences, of memorable experiences, when at the height of their lives, and under the pressure of effort and crisis, something akin to the almighty energy and peace has touched and lifted them up, and made the way of pain and sorrow the gate of a larger vision. Thus, one of the most keenly intellectual of men has told me how, in the most pressing times of need, he has turned to the unseen Power, and trusted himself to its motion, and has been borne up accordingly. Another strong man, too conscientious ever to be able to join any of the churches in the city of his home, told me once of a time of uncommon danger, when he had to bear the weight of a crushing public trust. He came literally

to know the meaning of the ancient words, "Underneath are the everlasting arms." The great spiritual forces come to us from the life of God by laws as sure as the conditions by which we can turn on the electrical energy.

The coming religion will prove invincible by virtue of facts like these. These are the real miracles, albeit rational and orderly, which when once a man has seen, he cannot doubt. The secret of consolation at the heart of the old religion now comes to light. The secret is that God is with us in all our sorrows, and that we are never alone. No pain is wasted, but it constitutes a form of effort, forever lifting the world from its animalism towards the heights of friendliness and happiness. All who sorrow now make a great brotherhood of sympathy, and thus love grows. As Jesus did not die in vain but left the world better, so every true man leaves the world better; hence a new consciousness of the significance of life, whereby the mystery grows lighter. We are not here "at all adventure"; we are builders and co-operators with God, sharers of His purpose and His work; His kingdom is a civilized world. This faith will bring about a new alignment of forces in the conduct of all practical affairs.

In short, everything forces upon us the conviction that this is a spiritual universe, whose great values, forever lifting themselves above the dust and toil of life, are justice, beauty, truth, and goodness. But a spiritual universe is another name for God's world, and the names of God are Power, Wisdom, and Love.

Out of all these considerations there finally emerges the star of an unquenchable hope. It is a hope, not merely for man in general and for the future of the race, but for the individual man also. Indeed we cannot imagine a valid and satisfying hope for the race, aside from the individual men who make the race. Whatever conception of the world spells life and not death for mankind, spells likewise life and not death for the individual. Only what constitutes personal worth constitutes worth for the race.

The fact is, that we cannot lead the life of religion as we have described it, in the terms of conscience and duty, of trust and good will, with all our heart and mind and strength, and not live a life of hope. By some profound relationship of the vital and spiritual elements, more real than the iron and nitrogen that enter into the making of our bodies, faith and love and hope are made to go together in a sort of

inseparable combination. They are the conditions of the fullest health of body, mind, and spirit. At our highest and best we tend to hope, and when hope fades life droops.

Moreover, though it may not seem so at first, this is an infinite hope. It cannot be satisfied with perishable and childish goods. It transcends finite limits. Wherever death stands, this marvelous hope always appears in the immortal sunshine beyond. It is as if the Master of Life forever forbids anyone to interpret the world into the terms of negation. Do you want fullness of life? Then go with the motion of life, and let yourself hope to the uttermost, as you trust and love to the uttermost. This is the practical way in which you make proof of the fact that the great life values belong together. You cannot leave one of them out and be quite your whole self at your best working power. Surely the mind that doubts and denies is not so strong as the mind that believes and hopes !

We have said Hope, and an Infinite Hope — a hope that means life — but we have not said and cannot say that which we hope for. That this must be so is of the nature of hope. It is an attitude, not a science, and this is all that is essential for man. Perhaps this is all that

could be well for him. As it is not good for the child to be living the man's life in anticipation, much less to know what his own future life will be, but rather to live the child's life with all his might, and be the best possible child; and as the ground of his hope of becoming the best possible man lies in this simple attitude, so we say of this present life: it is full of inexhaustible possibilities, crowded with the opportunity of love and noble deeds. Let it go on day by day, translating all manner of experiences into richness and unity. Let it gather daily new assurance of the presence and reality of the life of God; let it thus taste the quality of the eternal life. Let each man live this present life with all his might; let him take, as his natural birthright, the attitude of one who lives in hope, who looks upward and refreshes his soul with the sight of the sky; let him leave the rest to the Master of life, in whose good faith he trusts all. And so each year let him sing, as he presses toward the mystery of the everlasting light, "The best is yet to be."

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